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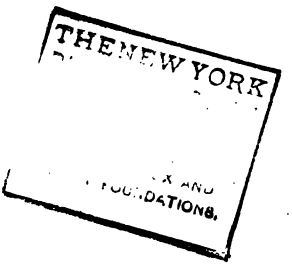
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MODERN ENGLISH SPORTS:

THEIR USE AND THEIR ABUSE.

Dedicated by Special Permission to Professor Ruskin.

BY

FREDERICK GALE

(THE OLD BUFFER),

AUTHOR OF

"The Life of the Hon. Robert Grimston," "Echoes from Old Cricket Fields," "Ups and Downs of a Public School," &c. &c.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,

CROWN BUILDINGS, 188 FLEET STREET.

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THIS BOOK

IS

Specially Dedicated

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TO

PROFESSOR RUSKIN

BY

THE AUTHOR,

WHO HAS RECEIVED MORE KINDNESSES AT HIS HANDS

THAN MANY VOLUMES COULD RECORD.

LONDON, *June 1885.*

A Large Paper Edition

OF

MODERN ENGLISH SPORTS,

Limited to 100 Copies, has been printed,

Price 10s. 6d.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON.

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LETTER FROM PROFESSOR RUSKIN.

CHISLEHURST, *5th June* 1885.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,—

I AM delighted by the dedication of your new book to me, not only because it shows me that you have pleasure in my sympathy, but also because I want people who care about my own books to know that I can admire many things which I don't talk of. Only in thanking you for this charming compliment, you must let me guard your readers from imagining that I think exactly with you on all points. You always do me good, whether in talking or writing, by showing me the brightest side of what I may have seen mostly on the opposite one, by your memorial of the frank hearts and cheerful ways of the country people of half a century since, and your praise of frankness, cheerfulness, and simplicity in all

persons and at all times; but I am not to be beguiled by your description of the interest of honest villagers in the success of a pretty and amiable horse, out of my general objections to horse-racing; neither by my joy in the "Lucas catch," which we marvelled at together, out of my steady wish that schoolboys should learn skill in ploughing and seamanship rather than in cricket; and that young ladies should often be sent to help the cook and housemaid, when they would rather be playing tennis. It seems to me also that you have not enough protested, in the name of all sensible players, against the turning any play into a laborious or dangerous business. Only the other day Mr. Arthur Severn pointed out to me, in a painting of a cricket match by old De Wint, that women and children were standing near the wickets. It seems to me cricket must have been in its true zenith in the days when it commended itself to those gentle spectators, and needed not warn them away.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. R.

To FREDERICK GALE, Esq.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.

"WHAT will you say after that good song, farmer?" asked the chairman.

"Good-luck to the roof we are under, and to our next merry meeting," was the farmer's response; and we all repeated the sentiment, and rapped the table and woke up the old shepherd, who was sitting by the fireplace with an old dog, which looked like a ball of grey worsted, and was asleep with one eye open, which he kept fixed on his master, awaiting his orders for a homeward move.

The scene, the *dramatis personæ*, and the occasion were as follows:—

The scene was in the long low-roofed room of a village inn, which probably had been built some three centuries ago. The *dramatis personæ* were a pretty large company

of cricketers, of all ranks, which included some few middle-aged men of all classes—gentlemen-farmers, tradesmen, local inhabitants, visitors from the surrounding hill country, parsons' sons, squires' sons, young public-school and university men ; in fact, all comers who had been present at the wind-up match of the year, which was specially memorable—as the parson, who was of the right sort to manage a parish, had put off the Harvest Thanksgiving for the cricket match. He was very wise in doing so, as the cricket-ground was the village green which lay between the pretty little church, which stood at the top, and the village inn, which stood at the bottom of the green ; and preparations for the wind-up match had been fixed for weeks before. The result was that the cricketers drank the parson's health at their supper (in his absence), and on the following evening many of them "gave the parson his innings," as they said, and went to the Harvest Service, and sang the Harvest Hymns with as much enthusiasm

as their old cricket songs. This all occurred some quarter of a century ago.

The farmer who gave "the sentiment" had just before sang a good old song with much feeling and pathos, and the last verse is worth recording, as it was very appropriate to a breaking-up for the season, which always has somewhat a tinge of sadness.

In the absence of the notes of the music, I will mark the metre of the last verse of the song as little boys used to do in their nonsense verses, as there were some pretty cadences in the song.

The singer was a hale and hearty veteran, well on between seventy and eighty, still possessing a good old mellow voice for a simple ditty. He was the last wearer of old mahogany-tops and breeches along the hillsides of the district, and his heart was as big as a lion's; and wherever any innocent amusement was going on, he and a powerful wall-eyed cob were together, with their heads pointing towards the *locus in quo*, the old man on the back of the horse, which never

failed to take him safe home at any hour. The shepherd and his old dog were prehistoric; no one knew the age of either, and the shepherd's was the last smock frock in the vale.

So now the party are pretty well introduced; and the last verse was as follows:—

"Then drain drain your glasses again,
Old Time is at hand to disturb our joys;
And though sad to the heart is the hour that we part,
That hour has not dawned on us yet, my boys."

And after the song and the sentiment, the old shepherd woke up, and with a little pressing had a pint of home-brewed beer with the chill off, and a little nutmeg and ginger in it, and according to the manner of the ancients was easily "drawn out," and "he minded the time when Bill Beldham and some of the Hambledon men, &c. &c., played on that old green when, &c. &c. &c."

The old shepherd's story, which can easily be imagined, will not be repeated here, as it consisted of many reminiscences which were

partly local. I like to listen to old men's tales, for they generally consist of pleasant memories.

Now in the following pages I am afraid that many readers will think me a bore, like some thought the old shepherd. I will save them the trouble of proving their case, for I will at once plead "guilty" to a charge of treasuring up pleasant memories, and of feeling very grateful that my happiest hours were derived from the fullest enjoyment of the harmless sports and pleasures of life; and from that standpoint I take stock of sports and pastimes of modern days.

In these days when sports of all kinds have acquired a publicity which was utterly unknown in the pre-railway days, and many thousands assemble to witness them in the place of the few hundred spectators who assembled in former times, it is worth while, perhaps, to consider the value of the sports themselves, and the objects for which they are promoted. The value of them is the encouragement which they give towards

developing the finest manly qualities when based on an earnest desire to use them as means of keeping the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and when followed in a spirit of chivalrous fair-play, with an aim of making them contribute to the recreation and amusement, good fellowship and happiness, of all who join in them.

There is a great deal said in these pages about sport being the mainspring of kindly feeling; and in relating the following circumstance, if any one thinks I do so for my own self-aggrandisement, he is welcome to his opinion. The facts were as follow:—

Some years since I was one of the last joined members of the Piscatorial Society, then consisting of a much smaller body than now. The Committee thought a little infusion of fresh blood into the annual gathering would do good, and to my surprise they asked me to take the chair at the annual dinner in St. James's Hall.

Frank Buckland, my old schoolfellow and breakfast-fag at Winchester, the best coffee-

maker and best cook in England, came as my guest (as he was not then a member), and sat on my left hand at the dinner. To my horror, I found that my right-hand neighbour was the late Mr. Francis Francis of the *Field*, in which paper Frank Buckland's principal writings appeared. I say "to my horror," as between the two well-known sportsmen there was a feud which no diplomacy or intercession of friends could heal, as Frank Buckland started *Land and Water* in opposition to his old friend's, owing to some misunderstanding. I knew Mr. Francis Francis well.

Turning to Frank Buckland, I said, "Will you shake hands with Francis Francis if he will?" and I asked a similar question of Francis Francis. A ready response from each told me that *now* was the time; and addressing them both, I said, "Now, if you two good fellows don't shake hands at once, I will fight you both." In the good company of brother fishermen the two men grasped each other's hand, and the feud was dead for ever.

The great leisure of to-day, compared with that which was granted in past days to those who pulled the labouring oar in life, has converted the *employés*, who, from overwork and constant late hours in cities and large towns, degenerated into effeminate Englishmen, who were designated by the opprobrious name of "Counter-Skippers" of the Tittlebat Titmouse School (so graphically described by the late Samuel Warren in "Ten Thousand a Year"), into fine, manly young fellows of pluck and sinew. And when a lady goes into a shop to make a purchase now, very likely the attendant, who serves her, will, on Saturday afternoon, be the champion of the cricket-field, the best oarsman in his crew on the river, or the best rifle-shot in his volunteer company, or the quickest runner across country in any other athletic sport.

At public schools and universities the most brilliant scholars were often the prominent athletes, as we may easily learn by looking over the roll of those who have

n le great places for themselves in the wc l in after life.

J so the extraordinary spread of our English sports, when used for the purpose and on the principles for which they were instituted, has increased by a hundred-fold the health and happiness of thousands of young Englishmen, and has planted in their minds the seeds of hope and vigour, and has withdrawn them from idleness and dissipation.

The author is well aware that there is a great diversity of opinion about shutting up footpaths, but for what it is worth he will, as an individual Englishman, stand by his own opinion till the end of time. That opinion is and will be, that property was safer, and rights of property were more respected, when there was universally a beaten track through the woods and fields between parish and parish; and the peasantry, in the enjoyment of a right which had descended to them from their forefathers, were the first to give notice of any acts of wrong or trespass. The

abolition of these rights has paved the way for the demagogue and mob orators, who are always trying to make the rest of the world as miserable and mischievous as themselves.

The reader is referred to pages 29–31 for the author's reason for using the term "The Old Buffer" in the title-page of this book.

It will be observed, by reference to Professor Ruskin's kindly letter to the author, that he insists on the purity of his "Arcadia," and he foreshadows that any cricket in that happy land must be adapted to the club ball game of 1743, the description of which is contained in these pages; and that horse-racing (if any) must be conducted without whip or spur, and only for the laurel crown, without any money; though possibly the Professor might allow the "Archers" and "Fordhams," and great jockeys of Arcadia, who rode the winners, to have their breeches and boots hung up in the temples of the gods as a reward for "a neck on the post."

MODERN ENGLISH SPORTS.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT USAGES OF SPORT.

"THERE is nothing new under the sun," either in the business or pleasure of life; and when some so-called novelty in the shape of game, or sport, or art is put before us, we generally find it to be "the same old game," or we fancy we've seen it before.

On the subject of the use and abuse of sports there must be a consensus of opinion amongst all sensible men that nothing is worthy of the name of a sport unless it contributes to the amusement of others as well as of ourselves, as we must be brother sportsmen or nothing; and whatever the matter

in hand may be, it must be carried out according to the strictest rules of honour and fair play, otherwise what should be a recreation and amusement becomes a snare and a delusion.

Classical scholars must know that the most of our sports came originally from the Greeks and the Romans, or at anyrate very many of them do.

It lightened the drudgery of the schoolboy who was sufficiently advanced to understand his Homer, and his Virgil and Horace, to acquire a knowledge of the ancient sports; and in the days of Spartan discipline at public schools, forty years ago or so, more or less, when quarrels were settled offhand by an appeal to the fist, and boys did not allow the sun to go down on their wrath, it was part of their education to be well posted up in the rules of the prize-ring, as a youngster might be wanted as a principal, a second, or a bottle-holder at the shortest possible notice. The fight between Dares and Entellus, graphically described in the fifth Æneid of

Virgil, was read with much gusto, and compared with newspaper accounts of modern fights; and so it was with all other "sporting" subjects related by the old classical writers, boys took kindly to them. An ill-natured master sometimes would give a half sneer at a broad-shouldered, manly boy, who was giving a free and spirited translation of the fifth Æneid, which contains the full account of the Trojan sports, or of that part of the fourth Æneid which gives a picture of the hunting party which Dido gave to Æneas, and would say to him, "I wish you would take as much trouble with your Plato and Xenophon as you do with these sports." Possibly no schoolboy ever did make for a response, "I wish you would let us learn books with a story in them a little more;" but in former days, whatever it may be now, it was very much the fashion to make boys learn the driest and hardest books, the subject-matter of which had no interest whatever.

Running, rowing, wrestling, boxing, quoit-

throwing, hunting, chariot-racing, horse-racing, and games of ball, were favourite sports of the ancients.

Polo, which has become fashionable during these last few years, is the "Chugar" of the Persians, and perhaps the Tartars too, and is supposed to be pre-historic.

Games kindred to fives, rackets, tennis, and lawn tennis were played in the days of Horace, and may have had their origin centuries before that era.

Any one who takes the trouble of refreshing his memory about the celebrated *Iter Brundusinium* (Sat. v. lib. i., Hor.), which gives a very amusing account of Virgil, Horace, Cocceius, and Macœnas going out for a lark, when they were bitten by gnats during their passage on the canal, and the bargee got drunk on bad beer and sang of his absent mistress, until a passenger had the presence of mind to get out and wipe him down with the soft end of a stick, will find as the story goes on, when they arrive at Capua, "Lusum it Macœnas, dormitum ego Virgiliusque,

Namque pilâ lippis inimicum est ludere crudis." The game which Macœnas played at was always supposed to be a kind of tennis (the "Pallone" of modern times), and the foundation of our tennis.

In the notes (48 and 49 to the fifth Satire on a Delphin Horace (lib. i.), and in note xi., Sat. ii. (lib. ii.), Hor.) the games of ball are fully explained. There were three principal games:

1. The "harpastum," a small ball made of leather, which was struck by the hand at first bound.

2. The "follis," a ball like a leather bag, probably filled with air similar to the ball used at "Pallone" or "balloona" now; the smaller ball propelled by the fist with a kind of wooden knuckle-duster, the larger with a wooden shield on the same principle as a racket.

3. "Trigonalis," at which the players stood in a triangle throwing the ball to each other, and running in and running out catching the ball with either hand; this last game comes very near to our fielding at cricket. There was another game, "paganica," which was

supposed to be a roving game, somewhat like hockey, golf, or lacrosse.

These games were much encouraged amongst the young men, and were played in the Campus Martius.

It is a curious thing, but hand-ball is supposed to be pre-historic in Ireland, and was and is a great national sport; and as it is known that the Phœnicians were in Ireland many centuries before Christ, it is quite possible that they imported it from the Mediterranean; but this is pure speculation.

"Buck, buck, how many fingers do I hold up?" which used to be a common enough game amongst boys at school and in the streets, was played in the streets of Rome in the days of Cicero, and mentioned as "micare digitis," to glitter or wink with the fingers, *i.e.* to move them quick as lightning, or, to use a favourite expression of modern young-lady novelists, to "glint;" or we might take another of their favourite words, to "shimmer."

We known that "croquet," upon whose grave I have jumped for joy, for it was a sad

and somewhat quarrelsome game, pursued much by parsons who seemed to follow it sombrely for want of a bride to marry, a child to christen, or a body to bury, was only the old game of "mall" or "pell mell," brought over from the Hague by Charles II. and his brother the Duke of York. It was not much fun to many who played it, especially to good-natured people, who were always being asked by some greedy and self-satisfied player "to bring your ball up and lie up by me;" and the consequence was that the good-natured man who complied with those requests was like a dog fetching and carrying all day for some one else who wanted to "take two off him."

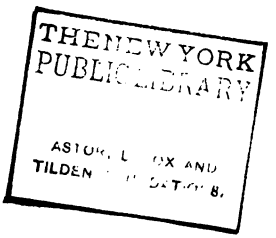
But when we come to "cricket," which many a genial after-dinner chairman has described as "our oldest national sport, gentlemen," we can only accept it with thankfulness as a magnificent sport, which has been handed down to us by our forefathers, and cherished and supported by them with loving care and no small expenditure of time and money.

It is a kind of medley sport, and, using the word in the more honourable sense, "a mongrel;" and on referring to different writers and authorities on the game, we find as many theories about its origin as there are letters in the alphabet, for particulars whereof consult Pycroft, Lillywhite's Scores and Biographies, Bolland's Cricket Notes, and other authorities.

"Rounders, hockey, club-ball, stool-ball," a game analogous to cricket, played by women of the past generations in the south of England, with a wooden battledore for a bat, a tennis ball, and two small tables turned down on end for a wicket, were ancestors of cricket. This game of stool-ball was played by women and girls within the last half-century in Kent.

Anyhow the game of cricket was built up from many sports which depended on quickness of hand and eye, courage and endurance; so the best thing is to canonize it at once as a masculine saint, and call it "St. Cricket."

He was a curious old saint, was driven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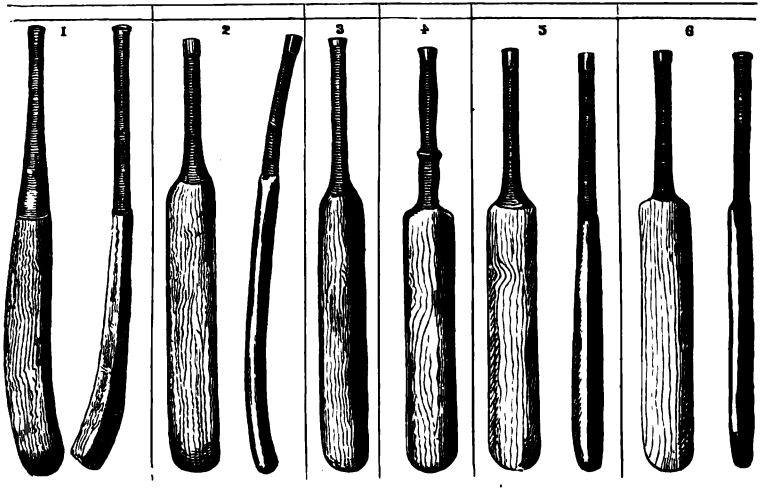

BATS FROM THE YEAR 1743 TO 1837.

To face page 9.

from post to pillar and from pillar to post, and from time to time, so to say, some good people gave him a suit of old clothes, some a meal of broken victuals; sometimes he was the guest of men of rank and position, and found a home in noblemen's parks, and was put, if reports are true, to a very bad purpose, and was used as a medium for betting and gambling. Sometimes he was suspected of being courted and invited into some lonely spot for the purpose of assembling people together nominally to witness a sport—in reality for holding unlawful political assemblies — and he never had anything like a settled home of his own till towards the middle of the last century.

Many of the writers in the reign of Queen Anne mention cricket so frequently that there is no doubt that a game under the name of cricket was being played somewhat after the style delineated in the old picture at Lords, which will be spoken of hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

CRICKET.

ALTHOUGH no account of the manner of playing the game is recorded, it may be as well to refer to a few of the earliest mentions of it.

In the "History of Guildford," published in 1593, temp. Elizabeth, there is an account of a trial about some waste lands, at which John Derrick, gent., deposed that when a scoller in the Free School at Guildford, he and several of his fellows did runne and playe at cricket and other games. In Picton's "Life of Oliver Cromwell" (published in 1881), Sir Richard Dugdale, a contemporary of Cromwell's, and a very learned writer, is quoted; and Sir Richard's account of Cromwell is that when at Cambridge, the future Protector was famous for football, cricket,

cudgelling, and wrestling, and acquired the name of a "Royster."

In Charles II.'s reign, it appears from the log that the crews of two or three ships of war landed at Antioch, and played, amongst other sports, at "cricket," and as there is an allusion to plenty of wines, punch, and lemonade being drunk, it sounds somewhat like a foreshadowing of our grand old English sport, which in the pre-railway days always wound up with a supper and plenty of singing and punch; and although at the present time suppers are much out of fashion, some reminiscence of the old custom is kept alive by smoking cricket concerts in London during the winter, at which the old-fashioned festivities are kept up.

In the "Life and Death of Thomas Wilson" (1672), in referring to the town of Maidstone, the biographer states he had seen cricket and other sports played there on the Lord's-day; and in Bowles' "Life of Bishop Ken," who was a boy at Winchester during the Commonwealth, he writes that

Ken, when a boy, might have been seen playing at cricket at Winchester; but this testimony reads as rather "speculative;" and certainly there is no record of the game amongst the college archives, as if there had been it would have been unearthed long ago.

In Chamberlayne's "Present State of England" (1707), a book which, amongst other things, contains the classification of the sports of the Court, the nobility and gentry, and of the lower orders, cricket is put in the lowest grade, and classed with "skittles, bear-baiting, and bull-baiting."

One fact is certain, which is that in 1743 the old Saint was of sufficient importance to have his picture painted in oils, which was exhibited in old Vauxhall Gardens, and also had obtained influence and notoriety enough to be roundly abused in the "Gentleman's Magazine" in the same year, and was charged as an encourager of crowds of idle and dissolute people, and of gambling.

The old oil picture which hangs in the pavilion at Lords' has been frequently repro-

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CRICKET, ANNO 1743.

To face page 13.

duced during the last few years, and must be familiar to very many now—in fact it has been copied, with some slight variations, on porcelain slabs for decorating the walls of taverns.

It is the old picture which represents the batsman defending a skeleton hurdle wicket of some two feet wide by one foot high, with a bat like the old-fashioned knives with curved backs; and the scorer, or "notcher," as he was called, is cutting the "notches" in a stick.

Then we have a kind of parish register in the shape of a score, dated three years after the picture, in 1746, by which we learn that most sins of omission and commission were practically similar to those of our own day, and to a great extent the game in its main principles was a very near relation of that of our own; and men were caught out, bowled, stumped, run out, &c., nearly a century and a half ago.

It would be re-threshing corn, which has been already threshed out, to go into all the

minutiæ of the laws of cricket. This article purports to be a short narrative and not a complete history of every detail.

The Saint's Shrine, to which numberless cricketers make their pilgrimage, is the old "Bat and Ball" at Hambledon,—or rather Broad-Halfpenny down near Hambledon,—a lone public-house, standing on a bleak down, where four cross-roads meet, open to the four winds of heaven, and commands a grand view of large undulating tracts of down lands all round. This was the home of the old Hambledon Club some hundred and thirty-five or forty years ago, and it is called the "cradle of English cricket."

The full account of the old club was written by Nyren in his "Cricketer's Guide," now a very rare book, but to be seen at the British Museum, and well worth a perusal. The old ground is enclosed, and the land was exchanged for some nearer the town or village. Though the inside of the house has been altered and modernised, the outside remains less altered, and the visitor

will find the same old locks, and bars, and bolts,—in fact, the shell is the same as it was in the days when Lord Sackville, Lord Tankerville, the Duke of Dorset, Sir Horace Mann, and the Earl of Winchelsea, and all the noblemen and gentlemen who fostered and supported the game, made matches there between Hambledon and All England, for five hundred guineas a-side.

The village of Hambledon alone is worth a visit. Nestled down under the lea of the downs in a beautiful valley, and screened from the winds, it looks a most inviting place to live in.

There you see the old-fashioned thatched cottages looking snug and comfortable, with the bee-hive in front of the cottages, and the gardens ablaze with flowers; snug farm-houses and gentlemen's seats are dotted in amongst the trees on either side, comfortable little inns where farm-house bread and best home-brewed beer may yet be obtained; and above all, Hambledon boasts a grand old church, and a grand old church-yard,

where the patriarchs of the game are at rest. This happy spot, which lies about equal distance from Winchester, Portsmouth, and Southampton, had the good fortune a few years back—and possibly may yet have —to be nine miles from any railway; hence its Arcadian glory.

Doubtless, as all cricket came from the hop-country, and Weyhill Fair, which was held some fifteen miles beyond Winchester, being the greatest hop fair in the south of England, where from time immemorial there has been the Kent Row, the Hampshire Row, the Sussex Row, and the Surrey Row in the hop market, the great matches were made at that fair; and Hambledon, being a rest-house on the downs, known to all who rode on horseback (as all did in those days to distant fairs), and being well out of the way, was selected as the home for the Hants and Sussex and Surrey division; the return matches being played in London, at the Artillery Ground, or in Kent.

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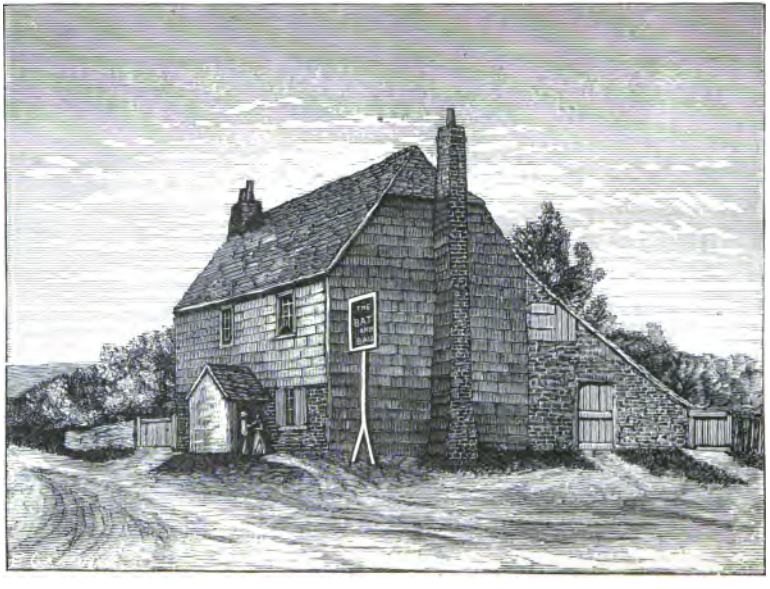

BAT AND BALL AT HAMBLEDON.

From a Drawing made by Goddard F. Gale in 1878.

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The noblemen and gentlemen who supported the Hambledon Club also supported their club at the Artillery Ground, the present site of the then Hon. Artillery Company's barracks, near Finsbury Square, and at "the Vine," in Sevenoaks, at Dartford, and other places in Kent. So, practically, it was all the same party to a great extent.

And the isolated position of the Bat and Ball had its advantages, as cricket, though a lawful game, was not popular in the earlier times, but only tolerated. Cricket and all public amusements which drew great crowds were always half-suspected of being taken advantage of for unlawful assemblages for political purposes, as the Jacobite party was by no means dead; and when cricket was in the bud, the heads of the traitor lords were hanging over old Temple Bar.

According to Sir Walter Scott's charming novel of "Waverley," Master Edward Waverley, of Waverley Honour, is represented as being enticed to a meeting of the clans under the guise of a stag-hunt at Glen-

naquoid by Fergus MacIvor, and was induced to desert the standard of George II., and to don the white cockade for Prince Charlie, or the Pretender, or the Chevalier, whichever name the reader likes to adopt; and large gatherings in the neighbourhood of towns and densely-populated districts were not popular. However, in the middle of the last century London became a cricket home, or rather the outskirts of London did, as one of its earliest homes was at the Artillery Grounds—then in the fields; afterwards at the White Conduit Grounds, which subsequently became the site of White Conduit Gardens, which were pulled down and the place turned into a reservoir some forty years since; thence the White Conduit Club migrated to Lord's Ground (as it was called after Lord the proprietor), situate in which is now Dorset Square, and called "The Marylebone Club," in 1787. Driven out by the builders, the club was moved to North Bank, Regent's Park, but the ground was taken by the Regent's Canal, and somewhere about seventy years

ago the present ground was obtained, then situated in a rural and suburban district; and although much enlarged and altered now, that ground has since become the freehold of the club, and it is practically a cricket kingdom, over which the club now holds Sovereign sway, and administers laws to the whole world.

The original small band of noblemen and gentlemen who formed the members of the club little dreamt that they would now be represented by a body of between two and three thousand members, with an income of some £15,000 a year, all loyally spent on cricket; and when they celebrate their centenary, as they will do in 1887, they may honestly look back, and feel that by steady management and careful preservation of all the traditions of the game, they have done a great national good, and one credited by the whole cricketing world as a loving and loyal fulfilment of a great public trust.

CHAPTER III.

CRICKET—(Continued.)

HAVING now traced the game down to its settled home in London, it may be as well to take a slight glance backwards, for the purpose of seeing how little the game has varied in principle.

It may be briefly stated that certainly for the last hundred and ten years the weight of the ball, the width of the bat, the distance between the wickets, and the measurement of the crease (with a trifling exception of two inches in the popping crease) have been the same as now; the modern wicket, or rather the wicket of to-day, has been of the same size since 1817.

The match bats of a century ago, many of which are now to be seen at the Marylebone Club, and at some makers', were very well

made, but much thicker in the pod and in the handles; and curiously enough now some of the foremost players are resorting to thicker pods and thicker handles again.

Until 1828 the bowling was all underhand, and probably until the early part of this century there was not much quick bowling, some of it childishly slow—Lord F. Beauclerck's to wit.

Osbaldeston, the mighty sportsman, who played first at Lords' in 1808, was desperately fast, and always wanted two long-stops. Brown of Brighton, in 1818, was equally terrific, and little Dench, his long-stop, used to wear a small sack stuffed with straw to protect his chest and lower part of his body. There is no doubt about these facts, nor any doubt about Walter Marcon, the six-foot Eton boy, in 1841, bowling or slinging a ball at such a pace that only a streak of red was to be seen, and no living man ever tried to keep wicket to him. The writer must put himself into the box to testify to these facts, as he played against W. Marcon twice forty-four years ago.

At the Lansdowne Club they kept the stumps which he broke, and from truthful records the broken stumps made a nice little faggot. Certain it is that he broke a man's leg at Oxford in bowling to him.

The round-arm bowling, both fast and slow, was brought to great perfection in 1835, and pads came in in 1841.

Grounds were brought to something like the same perfection as now in a few favoured districts at least thirty years ago. Until the railways had spread cricket all over England, the great county players were many of them retainers in noblemen's and gentlemen's estates, and were all men in *training* at every part of the game, and by steady practice amongst themselves in a set game, much resembling a real match, and by constant single-wicket matches, all kept up their fielding, bowling, and catching. The constant cricket-fagging at public schools, of which there was too much very often, trained gentlemen's sons in the most important points of the game, and the village greens were capital schools

for those of humble birth. In fact, though comparatively few played cricket of a high class, those who did were well trained.

Keeping clear of that quicksand, "comparing past with present," this may be said of the past: "Cricket was essentially a *game*, and nothing more or less."

Grand matches, of course, drew large crowds, and brought neighbours together, and matches being rarer and holidays fewer, the day's play never commenced later than eleven o'clock, and generally earlier, and matches were mostly played out in country districts; and two days usually were enough for big matches, though sometimes they ran into three days, in which case a single-wicket game was got up for the amusement of the spectators if the grand match terminated early. These single-wicket matches were often made for a small stake to encourage the players. In country villages, when the honour of the parish was at stake, all classes joined; and if the carpenter or blacksmith was by

general acknowledgment the best man, he would be captain, and the nobleman or squire's son would pay him due allegiance, and obey his orders.

School cricket was mostly confined to matches amongst the boys themselves, with a master or two playing occasionally. Winchester, Harrow, and Eton were the only schools who met at Lords', and played in the holidays, after the season was over, amidst a good deal of friendly chaff, before a ring of fifteen hundred or two thousand people, with plenty of room to run their runs out; and every match was finished. The matches created a great deal of fun and good fellowship, and many life-long friendships in after days.

Celebrated players of the past who passed the best of their youth and manhood in the game, both amateur and professional, played in nothing but first-class matches, and were often "given men," for the purpose of equalising a side; and those who were constantly making large scores, or assisting materially

in any point of the game, must have been very steady players, and have played with a wonderfully straight bat, and have had a wonderfully quick eye, and also the golden qualities of courage and confidence.

We all know what cricket of to-day has come to. It has become amongst professionals the business of life, and a source of getting a living; and professionals have become regular retainers at public schools and clubs.

Cricket grounds form a sort of out-door theatre to thousands of people; we read in bed, if our newspaper boy is punctual, of matches that were being played in every part of England yesterday afternoon, and sometimes (by wire) in the Colonies too. Ever since the historic Canterbury week was inaugurated with cricket, theatricals, and balls, other places have gradually followed suit, and now in numberless districts in England there is "The Cricket Week."

Every one says there is too much cricket, and every one seems to be trying to increase

what there is. Every one says matches are too long, and are too seldom finished, and that five balls ought to be substituted for four to the over, and that matches ought to begin at eleven o'clock instead of twelve o'clock; and they say that innings are too easy through the establishment of boundary hits against palings and walls out of the way of the crowd, which might as well be run out, and still nothing is done. It is the old story—

"Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor."

A little bird whispers that professional players, whose ambition it is to play six days a week, and who spend one and sometimes two nights a week on the railway, do not want to play more than six and a half to seven hours a day, and that clubs whose expenses are enormous, must have three whole days' play for the sake of the gate-money.

No doubt now, as an exhibition, cricket is seen in perfection; the only fault being that

every obstacle has been put in the bowler's way by making pitches like billiard-tables, and practically allowing a batsman to guard his wickets with his pads as well as his bat.

The truth is that all England has got into a groove, and "here we are," as the clown says; and what makes matters worse is that country clubs are imitating the bad example set by public cricketers in London and in large cities. It is almost impossible to get a country eleven on to the ground until twelve o'clock and often later. In Saturday-afternoon matches half-past three o'clock is a common hour to commence, instead of two o'clock; and if in a country match the captain, for fashion's sake, chooses to throw away numbers of runs and chances too by playing without a long-stop to moderately swift bowlers, the captain on a village green imitates the same absurdity. There ought to be no such thing as "fashion" in cricket: a good captain will alter his game according to circumstances and occasions, and what may be right to-day may be wrong to-morrow. He

ought to know what every man in his eleven can do, and *make* him do it.

The remedy for all this lies in every young amateur's own hands. If he casts about he will be sure to find a club whose members are *bonâ-fide* cricketers and sportsmen, who play for the love of the game and nothing else, and only play against those of the same calibre and disposition as themselves. Never mind if some of them are doubtful about the letter "H," or are cleverer with their knife than their fork at dinner. You will find many such on many a village green, whom foolish people call "snobs" or "howling cads," who are hearty and good honest young Englishmen loving the game for the game's sake, and who never pretend to be "swells," and who are in the essentials truer and better men than those who sneer at them.

If you are above them in social position, your main difficulty will be in declining to accept the highest seat in the synagogue; and if you work hard with them, they will esteem you for what you are worth, and the

esteem of honest cricketers of all classes is a pearl of great price.

Some of the leading amateurs of to-day are men of leisure and fortune, who are working hard for their counties, and, as patrons and players of the game, are generally to be found amongst the hardest workers and maintainers of order and fair-play, and really are the saviours of old-fashioned English cricket. Setting the example of punctuality, discipline, and close attention to the game, and making it an amusement to others as well as to themselves, they are doing a real practical good; and any young cricketer entering on public cricket will find that by following the examples of such men they will really learn the secret of enjoying the pleasure of the grandest national game in the world, and will reap from it its best fruits, namely, innocent recreation for mind and body.

The most gratifying sight which we English cricketers have seen on any cricket ground for many a day was last year when the gentlemen of Philadelphia paid us a summer visit.

Dropping the conventional "we," and speaking in the first person, I will tell exactly what I saw at Lords' and what I heard—first stating that I had known the Philadelphian cricketers by correspondence for two or three years before their visit, as they did me a double honour—first by writing to myself about many points connected with the history of the game (with many apologies for inserting in their cricket paper, "The American Cricketer," all my cricket articles which appeared in print in England), and secondly by asking for a cabinet photograph of myself for their club-room, with a hearty invitation to go over and see it hanging there and accept their welcome.

On going to the pavilion at Lords' and asking some of the Americans for Captain Green, who was their commander-in-chief, he was pointed out to me, and I went up to him and asked if he was Captain Green? Looking at me straight in the face, he said, "It is *you* by your likeness to your photograph; give me *both* your hands—it's worth coming

all the way across the Atlantic to shake hands with 'The Old Buffer'"—which is a *nom de guerre* under which I have written much about the noble game in the sporting papers.

A hearty greeting of this kind was a good opening not likely to cool; and as the American eleven were then in for their first innings against a very heavy Marylebone score, I made the remark that "I feared they were overmatched a little."

"Sir," was the Captain's reply, "we had a tremendous leather-hunt yesterday, and I can't tell you how proud we are, and how much obliged we are to the Marylebone Club for setting some of their first English gentlemen against us. We came here to meet *your* great English amateurs at *your* Lords' ground, and we don't mind the beating which we *must* get the least; and last night *your* Marylebone Club gave us a banquet and a welcome which we shall never forget. There *ain't* much pride amongst your British aristocracy."

"Oh, no," I replied. "You will find, if you

stay long enough with us, the rule is, 'the higher the rank the greater the courtesy.'"

Anyhow the Americans were delighted, and, as we all know, during their visit, wherever they were, they showed the most admirable temper, good fellowship, and good feelings; and if the game of cricket had been specially invented for their amusement, they could not have appreciated or enjoyed it more in its true spirit.

There was no hint about gate-money or vain glory, and there was not a single word of quarrelling, or shadow of disappointment at defeat, or triumph in victory, from start to finish. This is just what cricket should be.

And to make the matter perfect, on the return of the party to America, Captain Green did not forget to write me a charming letter, apprising me of his safe passage home, which contained more kind expressions of goodwill, and happy recollections of the old Mother country, and the welcome which he and his friends had received on every cricket ground from all classes, than can be repeated here.

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WILLIAM BELDHAM.

From Photo. taken in 1856.

JOHN BOWYER OF MITCHAM, *Cricketer.*

From Photo. taken in 1880 *at* 90 *years of age.*

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Only fancy, all the above sermon about cricket without a word about our great heroes of the past.

One parting word about them must be forgiven, and the writer must be pardoned for winding up with his creed in the first person; therefore, "I believe, from all accounts received by living witnesses, taken in connection with the fact that William Beldham played from 1787 till 1821 in all the greatest matches of his day, and very often as the given man to equalise a side, he must have taught many generations the value of the straight bat; and that Fuller Pilch, whom I knew from the year 1837 till his death, was the father of the grand forward play; and I say 'Amen' to those who maintain that Dr. Gilbert Grace is the greatest cricketer ever seen."

Beldham, the Nestor of cricket, was born in 1766; played first for the Marylebone Club in 1787, made his bow in 1821, and died in 1862, *ætat.* ninety-six, having lived fifty-four years in the reign of George III. and twenty-five years in her present Majesty's reign.

CHAPTER IV.

ROWING: PAST AND PRESENT.

LONG after the Waterman Company's steamers plied between bridges, which event occurred in 1838, in the early days of her present Majesty's reign, there were many "stairs," as they were called, to and from which Thames wherries plied; and at the foot of Westminster Bridge, on the Vauxhall side, stood Searle's boat-yard, from which the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race, the Westminster boys' boat-races, and many others, were rowed to Putney; and at the Temple stairs might have been seen the Templars' boat, manned by students at any of the Inns of Court who kept up their Oxford or Cambridge experiences. Moreover, there were to be had at Searle's "half-deckers" — cutters with considerable beam and half-decked — which

were let out to the most reckless navigators, especially Westminster boys, who had the credit of being pretty ready at repartee or a passage of arms with the "long-shore" roughs on either side of the banks of the Thames. Narrower channels and an immense increase of traffic have practically robbed the Londoners of much of their aquatic amusement between the bridges, and from all accounts the abominable steam-launches have to a great extent ruined the fishing and boating in the Upper Thames.

We are a very curious people, we Londoners, and are subject to fits of hopeless *dementia*. About February, after the return of the Oxford and Cambridge men to their respective Universities, we—*i.e.*, the Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons who are engaged in business, who run up and down by train, and meet at restaurants—are the most knowing fellows about rowing in the world; and after Easter, in the few weeks which intervene between it and the Derby, we know

more about horse-racing than any other people in the world.

It is a very harmless madness, and does a good many people some benefit, and does not do any one any real harm.

From early February onwards the public demand to know every detail about the University crews—when they go out, how they go out, what changes are made in the boats, who coaches them, the strictest account of the health of every member of either crew.

Well, all this employs some to write the account, some to print it, and promotes the sale of the papers. During the training of the crews this year we had a very full budget of news as usual, and as usual all the shops were ablaze with dark blue and light blue ribbons, dresses, gloves, and even *bas de soie.* As the time draws nearer we get more and more knowing; Jones tells Smith that No. 7 is only a passenger, sir, and must "wreck the ship," or that No. 5 "caught a crab, sir," and the odds have changed round to 6 to 4 on one side or the other.

There is one thing certain as regards the Oxford and Cambridge race, which is, that there is a moral certainty that on a certain day, and at a certain hour, the crews of the very pick of the manhood of Young England will be found in either boat ready to row till they drop for the honour of their University; and that the only palm of victory is the hoisting of one flag above the other when the race is over. And there is another charm about it, which is, that both crews sit down in the evening in the company of Judges, Dignitaries of the Church, statesmen, and old oarsmen of either University, in that good honest spirit of harmony and friendship which is the keystone of all manly English sports.

As to the pluck of both sides, it has been sorely tried; for many years ago, at Henley, the Oxford crew, being one short from untoward circumstances, pulled seven against eight Cambridge men, members of the Cambridge rooms, though it was not an Oxford and Cambridge University match

proper. It was hard lines for Cambridge, as there was no glory in victory, and much disappointment in defeat; and naturally all sympathy was with the weaker side, who to the astonishment of the rowing world won the race.

But to show what pluck will do under trying circumstances, some few years afterwards, on the Thames at Putney, through the outrageous conduct of some of the managers of the steamboats which followed the race, the Cambridge boat was swamped, and the crew, who had a pretty good chance of finding a watery grave for one or more of their number, kept stroke, and pulled until the boat fairly sank under them; and it was reported that more than one either could not swim or were *very* poor swimmers.

This is the kind of English pluck that makes these trials a glory to us all, who belong to the same nation.

But setting aside the University boat-race, which has now become such a national event that a special Act had to be passed for regu-

lating the river traffic on the day of the race, this annual fillip which the boat-race gives to Young England produces much good fruit; and although it is to be regretted that the steam-launch nuisance ever existed, still there is water left to row on, not only on the Thames and the Lea, but on innumerable other rivers in England which draw out the energies of those who can derive the greatest amount of good by rowing.

Some of the names of the clubs may be a little pretentious perhaps — such as the "Argonauts," the "Corsairs," the "Pirates," or some other bold rovers; but since the establishment of the ever-blessed Saturday half-holiday—one of the greatest boons ever given to England for the sake of body and mind—in many large business establishments, and in many Young Men's Associations—ay, and often too under the auspices of some old Oxford or Cambridge oarsman, who combines the qualities of a good parson and good muscular Christian, boating clubs have been formed; and hundreds of young men belong-

ing to a class, who, thirty years ago, knew nothing but endless weekly toil, now have the opportunity of indulging in the same manly exercises on the river as formerly belonged only to those who occupied a grade above them in the social scale.

We may depend upon it that large firms who employ a number of young men get better work, better honesty, and engender more mutual respect between employers and employed, by taking a lively interest in the athletic sports of those who serve them during the week; and who, instead of passing their Saturday afternoon in the atmosphere of a billiard-room reeking with tobacco and gas, or in exchanging witticims with the pot-boy in some tavern, are engaged in a friendly contest on the river, and a sociable evening afterwards.

Mr. Searle was good enough to communicate a few particulars about boats past and present.

The old racing boats at the time of the first Oxford and Cambridge match, which

was pulled in 1829, were from 45 to 50 feet long and about 4 feet broad. The oars had square handles, and were rather longer and heavier than those of to-day. The present boats are about 2 feet 2 inches in the broadest part, and from 57 feet 8 inches to 60 feet long.

Amateurs first steered in the University races in 1839; previous to that time Parish and Moulton and Phelps were often coxswains.

The loom of the oar was much the same as now. The outriggers came in first in 1846; the round bottoms *vice* keels in 1857; the sliding seats in 1873.

The present racing boat in many particulars resembles the dug-out canoe of the savages; for just as now the crews keep their oars in the water when lying still, to prevent the boat from rolling over, so in the canoes of the savages, which were propelled by a paddle, there was an outrigger with a flat paddle at the end fixed to the side of the canoe for the same purpose, like that used in some of the catamarans.

Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews, who got up the first Oxford and Cambridge race, and who himself pulled in the Oxford boat, writes as regards training, "Very underdone meat, bread, and good sound beer or porter was considered the proper diet; and running a mile at top speed early in the morning was one of the things much relied on for training."

The first race was rowed at Henley, two miles against stream, which the Bishop would like to see in these days *vice* the longer course.

The present Provost of Eton writes that the first Eton and Westminster match was rowed in 1829, so we may suppose that the School and University contests set in together.

It is a curious thing that professional rowing has become comparatively a dead letter, and the great interest in sculling matches, which used to be frequent, seems to have passed over to Australia and Canada. The institution of steamers, of course, was the first blow

to professional rowing; and afterwards the Thames Embankment and abolition of "river stairs" drove the gallant young watermen away from the busy haunts of men.

Moreover, on the occasion of a sculling match more than *once* there was a grave suspicion about the *bonâ fides* of the contest, and "fouls" occurred.

The same thing occurred in professional running; and the cause probably is that a public man is no longer one of many, each of whom in his individual capacity was hero of some comparatively isolated district, backed and followed by all his immediate neighbours, but belongs to all England, and *horresco referens* becomes the subject of wagering in every quarter of the United Kingdom; and if Bill Stokes is backed to row against Will Styles for a small stake, it will be in all the papers and read in every quarter of England next morning.

There is no reason why as straightforward men as ever lived cannot be found now as rowers, runners, or anything else as formerly,

but there is a dearth of a class who were common enough, namely "backers." In the days of the ring, rowing, running, &c., when sports were scarcer, noblemen and gentlemen could be found who would back A, or B, or C, for a hundred or two hundred pounds perhaps, and the event, whatever it was, came off, and the arrangements were made and carried out.

The "backers" were masters of the situation; but since the days of railways, telegraphs, and the ubiquitous betting-man, any one who is backed now would be looked on as public property, and be searched out by men who wanted to "get the office" and to find out "if it was on the square;" in fact, trying to take any advantage of their neighbours.

The fact of outside interference is lamentably instanced by the dangers attending a Derby favourite now. It is notorious that directly a horse is a favourite, if he belongs to a real sportsman, who cares more about winning the race than about all the money

in the world, the horse is practically in a state of siege for months before, and cannot be taken out of the trainer's or watcher's sight for a moment, or be left day or night, for fear of being "got at!" Any one who takes the trouble to go on to a railway platform on a race day, and watches the early travellers who go by the cheap trains, with money-bags slung round their shoulders, cannot fail to observe the low cunning and villainy written upon some of their countenances. They represent the lowest stamp of betting-men and welshers; and low and contemptible as they may appear outwardly, there are combinations amongst them which are always tending to undermine fair-play in every public sport.

It is useless in enclosed grounds putting up notices of "No betting allowed;" the wretched crew of small betting-men spring up as if from beneath the green sward, and the "four to one, bar one," is heard on all sides. These men would poison a horse, hocus a jockey, oarsman, or runner, or offer

a bribe far in excess of the stakes to make the matter quite safe; in fact, there is hardly a villainy known at which they would crane. They have nothing to do with the great bookmakers, who are practically to the turf what stockbrokers are to shareholders, nor would it matter to them whether the things on which they bet were racehorses, or costermongers' donkeys, or geese crossing a common, provided there were enough entries for the event; as their (the bookmakers') principle is to lay the shortest odds they can get taken against every horse. They are very clever calculators, and make a book on which they must win anyhow; and all the bookmakers of position make it a point of honour to pay their losses immediately, even before they receive their winnings.

Whether the system is good or bad we have nothing to say, except that amateur sportsmen who go on the turf or into any sport as "backers" by bets *very* seldom do any good. We hear plenty about it when they *do* win; but the unknown losses pro-

bably preponderate in a ratio of twenty to one.

The charm of the University races is that they are rowed for honour only; and when we meet a flippant young gentleman in a railway carriage or at a restaurant, who tells us in confidence, "They are laying six or seven to four on Oxford against Cambridge," or *vice versa*, we know that he is talking nonsense, and simply repeating a lot of "parrot talk" which is coined among a set of young idlers who know nothing about boat-racing or anything else. There may be a simple young fellow, with more money than brains, who may publicly offer odds for bravado for a sum worth having, and of course the bet is instantly snapped up; and an instance of such folly is repeated and multiplied, as regards amount, by dozens of gossip-mongers until it is believed in as a common fact; the real fact probably being that nine bets out of ten are in shillings—up to sovereigns perhaps —and no more. I never heard of any one who offered long odds to any large amount,

or heard of any one who *knew* any one who did, on the boat-race. Of course, such a thing *may* have happened here and there, but so far as can be learned, it is not general enough to be quoted in any way.

And the same may be said about cricket; for during almost a lifetime in the game, "*bar one*," as the betting-men say, I never absolutely knew of one heavy bet being made at long odds, and that really *was* made and paid. The odds were in hundreds, and the odds were *long*, and the layer of them lost and paid at once; and although the amount to the loser was literally a fleabite, for he was very rich, he was much distressed about the matter, because the affair got wind, and was the cause of a report being spread that betting-men would do well to attend on cricket grounds, as "gentlemen were *anxious to make a book*," and no one in England would have set his face more thoroughly against such a thing than the loser of the large bet.

CHAPTER V.

FOOTBALL AND LACROSSE.

THE game of football is always a subject of much dispute. There is a large party who cry it down, and a much larger party who cry it up, otherwise the daily London papers would not report matches as they do. There are one or two towns where, by old custom, on certain days the ball is put down in the main street, and the inhabitants have a prescriptive right to play their game regardless of bye-laws, of mayors and corporations, local boards, or bumbledom in general. Kingston-on-Thames is one of these places.

Until the last twenty years or so, except at schools, football was almost a game of the past, and was rarely ever seen or heard of. In these days when special trains are run for grand matches, and fifteen thousand people

are assembled to see a match, as was the case during this present year at Kennington Oval when the match between the Queen's Park and Blackburn Rovers—virtually Scotland and England—was played, football has now become a big fact which merits special notice as a national game. There has been much controversy about both styles—the Association game and the Rugby game—and whenever a bad, and sometimes even a fatal, accident has happened, there has been much writing to the papers, and expenditure of ink and temper for no purpose whatever.

There is one golden rule about playing football, which is that it is simply madness for any one to enter upon a game which requires great powers of endurance, unless he is in every sense of the way perfectly sound in wind and limb and in real good physical training. As to the danger, that must be thrown to the winds. Are we to have feather-beds placed on either side of a fence in the hunting-field? Is shooting to be stopped

because some wretched Cockney pulls his gun at full-cock through a hedge, and "pots" himself or a friend because he does not know the first rudiments of handling a gun? Is skating to be stopped because a few foolhardy fellows go on ice of unknown thickness with water under of unknown depth and get drowned?

The whole thing is not arguable. It might be very fairly considered whether the umpires or the referee might not have the power of ordering a player who shows savage and brutal proclivities out of the game; but taking the game as a whole, the accidents do not preponderate over those of any violent exercise.

Speaking of the Association game first, it is astonishing in how few years it has become almost a science. The old school, who remember their boyish games like bigoted old Tories, as most good sportsmen are, talk of the superiority of their game, which was played with a heavier ball, which might be stopped with the hands and instantly put

down and kicked. But now we must consider the game as it exists.

There is as much "head" work almost as "foot" work in the Association game; still the ball being light, the "heading" the ball is part of the game. Just as in cricket and all other sports where several play on a side, the man who plays for himself and not for his side loses many points in the game, the main feature of which is passing the ball to a friend who is comparatively in an open space, and getting it away from opposing foes in front of him.

A cool head and quickness of decision, and of course great pluck, are the main virtues in a football player, and it is curious to watch how quickly the lookers-on appreciate unselfishness. They roar "well passed" when a player is content to turn the ball over to his neighbour who is in a better position for forwarding it on; but there is, on the other hand, an agonising cry of "Shoot! shoot!" when a player tries to keep the ball to himself on the chance of kicking the goal, and not letting one of his own side do it.

Those who play the game of to-day according to the Association rules, have a perfect right to regulate their own proceedings, and to decide whether professional players shall or shall not take part in it. There is much diversity of opinion on the subject, but to the spectators it is certainly pleasanter to see a football contest between amateurs pure and simple, when the players belong to public schools or are members of either University, than between mixed sides of amateurs and professionals. There is more chivalry between the belligerents, and less frequent factious appeals for an advantage, real or imaginary, by the players or their partisans in the crowds when there are no professionals engaged.

Pads at football are quite a modern fashion, and were never dreamt of in days gone by, as a good player rarely, if ever, kicked anything but the ball in an open game. It is a matter of fancy, but to a spectator it does seem to be the case that those who have not adopted these leg-protectors play a more dashing game than those who do.

Anyhow, football deserves the thanks of thousands of young Englishmen, and of those to whom they belong, for promoting health and amusements in the dead of winter, and sending out into the pure air those who have the hardihood to face wet and cold with no protection but a jersey and a pair of flannel knickerbockers, and who are not afraid of a roll in the mud with the best good-humour in the world.

If there is a flash of temper for a moment, it is only like a passing cloud, and anything like mean or shabby conduct receives its own punishment on the spot, as it is always marked by the strong disapproval of the crowd; and like all other manly sports, football is a school for discipline as regards observance of the rules of honour and fair-play.

Now for the Rugby game; it is a mystery, a very great mystery, and its devotees will not hear of any other. Well, there is plenty of room for both games, and the advocates for a ball like a Portugal grape and those who

will have nothing but a ball like a melon much resemble the Big-endians and Little-endians in "Gulliver's Travels;" and as Sir Roger de Coverley remarked, "Doubtless there is a great deal to be said on both sides."

Repeating a definition of it which I gave in *Baily's Magazine* on seeing the Engineer and Artillery cadets play some years since, the ball appears to me very much like a mutton-chop which A is about to devour with a keen appetite, which B snatches from him, when A collars B, and B throws it to C, who is collared by D, and so on by E, till every one is collaring each other, and the mutton gets thrown out of the crowd, and a passing dog bolts with it, and no one gets it at all. Whatever the points of the game may be, which are too complicated for any but experts to master, be they what they may, the game itself is a fine manly sport, and very funny to look at, and very exciting; and although there is no record of any gentleman having been treated as Marsyas was, it

does seem wonderful that no one has ever been "skinned" at it. From all accounts it has lost nothing in interest from its being divested of some of the rougher play of the past, which has been discontinued by mutual consent, as all the talk in the world will never persuade any one that "hacking" was one iota above the "kicking" in the Cornwall and Devon wrestling, when one or both "players" (for wrestling was called playing for a fall) would have their shoes full of blood.

Lacrosse, which is the last imported sport, and of a later date than football revived, is pure North American, a game which is possibly pre-historic amongst the Red Indians.

In many points it resembles the Association football, and depends in passing the ball from friend to friend, and the ball must not be handled except by the goal-keeper.

It is a quicker game than football, because when the ball is once started there are practically no bounds hardly, so there is very little delay by the ball "going out," which is rather a drawback at Association football.

Any one can learn the game by seeing it once, and an admirable little handbook giving all the details necessary for a tyro to know, published at the office of "Cricket," and written by Mr. E. T. Sachs, who is an ardent promoter of the sport, will do a great deal more than any attempt at description here. It is a game which depends almost wholly on good condition, and it is useless to any one, as regards enjoyment, who is not a very quick and lasting runner. Like most other sports it is growing, and likely to take deep root, as it can be played all the year round, and any large field or open common will provide the ground.

Moreover, as regards implements it is very inexpensive; and as the best costume is the lightest running dress, any one who follows it ought to be sound in wind, limb, and, above all, constitution.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL ATHLETICS.

By general athletics we mean all the manly and noble exercises which are common now to public schools, universities, and clubs, and which are not within the category of games—such as running, walking, jumping, cycling, "hare and hounds," paper chase, and the like.

Now looking at all these as adjuncts to health and strength and honest emulation, they are most admirable; but those who follow them get sometimes on very thin ice, in the shape of the boundary which separates the Amateur from the Professional.

Every day this boundary is becoming more undefined.

The question was raised very urgently by the theatrical world not long ago about

"amateur theatricals," so called, "for charities." Well, we all know that the theatrical world has sometimes a *little* feeling called "jealousy," and a very little of that feeling makes a strong blaze when once lit. No doubt they are right in the main when they say that a large number of amateur actors are ready enough to play for a charity when their travelling, hotel expenses, dresses, and all charges are paid for them, and they enjoy the *eclât* and display and pomp and show attending their entertainments; and whilst they are producing second-hand bad imitations of actors and actresses who have *created* the characters on the stage, in reality they are robbing those whose bread depends on the histrionic art by forestalling the market. The "poor players" require all our sympathy and consideration, as their work is very hard and the prizes very few, and their charity towards each other very abounding.

Just so old athletes of all kinds, who remember the days when sports were pretty much confined to schools, colleges at either

university, and country villages, as adjuncts to a cricket match, a race meeting, or a fair or the like, lament the fashion of to-day when gate-money and out-of-pocket expenses to amateurs have become the custom of the age.

In the earlier part of this century, in the west of England, when rougher sports were common, the cudgel-players, boxers, and wrestlers had their stand or ring, and met all comers who chose to throw a hat on to the stand or into the ring with the weapon which he professed.

In the autobiography of old Paul Bedford, which was published twenty years ago, he records that he saw the *debût* of Gully the prize-fighter, who was returned as M.P. for Pontefract, and afterwards was known as the celebrated racing man. It took place at Bristol Fair early in this century. A gigantic bully, who was called "Sixteen-String Jack," attended the fairs in Somerset, ready to fight all comers. The man weighed about eighteen stone, and naturally,

owing to his overwhelming strength and reach, he became a champion in his own district. He had just beaten a Bath man, known as "The Flying Tinman." They come across one like the crack of an old whip, these curious nicknames of pugilistic heroes of the past. The big bully made some insulting remarks about "polishing off any number of 'Bath squirts,' and sending them home crying to their mothers," when young Gully, who was the son of a butcher and small farmer at Crick, near Bath, outraged by the threats of the braggart, threw his hat into the ring, and stripped and went at the giant, and to the great delight of the spectators, beat him to a stand-still. The fame of his exploits reached the ears of the pugilistic association, and young Gully was introduced to the London ring, and his public career commenced. As history truly records, Mr. Gully, whose word was good for any amount on the turf, lived much respected, and died very wealthy.

The reverse is now the case as regards

fame being local, as every country sport gets reported in the London papers, and one of the evils of public athletics arises therefrom, which is the mania amongst some aspirants to go round the country "pot-hunting," as it is called; in other words, entering themselves in various handicaps open to all comers.

The drawback to almost all public sports of the present day is that they depend on gate-money to a very considerable extent, even including a lawn-tennis match, which is essentially an amateur amusement. It is a new fashion, and the world must do as it likes, and the world must satisfy its own conscience in respect to amateurs accepting their expenses. The fair argument is, that if a young fellow who is "facing the world" as a student in any learned profession in London or in commerce, or anything else, cannot afford to pay his own expenses for all his amusements, he had much better only follow those which he can pay for.

Therefore it is good advice to give to any one starting in life, in these days of Saturday

half-holidays and cheap access to places of all kinds for winter or summer sports, that he should cut his coat according to his cloth, and join only with others in his own neighbourhood who want a great deal of amusement for a very little money, and make the sport, whatever it may be, an amusement amongst themselves.

The school sports of boyhood, or University, or London sports of more advanced age, are the very keystones to manly vigour and all that is noble and excellent; and young men of fortune and leisure, who are not dependent on hard work for a living, cannot do better than support athletics according to their several tastes.

On the contrary, young men who are dependent on their own exertions cannot do worse than to follow a sport which involves much waste of time *because it costs nothing*, according to modern manners and customs. It costs them what they can least afford—time which they cannot spare.

These modern customs give rise to nasty

criticisms, which, whether wholly or partly true, do not add to the dignity of a sport. "Oh!" say the professionals, "they are *paid*," alluding to amateurs who take part in certain sports, and who receive their "bare expenses" (as they are called) "as much as we are really," as they have nothing to put by for the winter. The facts are undeniable, and they are simply as follows:—Amateurs give in many instances nothing for their sport and amusement but their time and services. This may be all very well in certain instances and in certain emergencies, when occasionally an amateur is *very* excellent at any sport; and then all his colleagues, spectators, and friends are glad that he should do so, for the sport is better for it; and when it is notorious that he could not play unless his expenses were paid, every one is glad that they *are* paid.

But there is another class of a totally different sort, composed of young men who talk a great deal about their club or county or whatever it may be, and who selfishly enjoy the prestige, which always is attached

to a public sport, for *nothing*, and whose sole aim and object from start to finish are self-glorification at a cheap rate. These are hard words, but they are very true, and point to one moral, and that is, "Make your sport the means of promoting the *mens sana in corpore sano*." Let it be a relaxation and amusement for yourself and others. Do your very best unselfishly, and be very particular that you do all in your power to advance those a little below you in rank and position, and cede a point or some advantage to them, and make them your brother sportsmen. A little encouragement is a wonderful thing to a "climbing brother;" and anything like harshness and unfairness, and overmuch use of official power, cause heart-burnings and jealousies, depreciate the sport, and are the cause of many a failure.

In the sports named above — running, walking, jumping, cycling, hare and hounds, paper-chases, and the like—the grand thing is to take care that they are used as amusements and not made the business of life. Off-

hand sports, begun and ended as it were on the spur of the moment, have much more value, and create much more amusement than those which are made a great event of.

In former times, when village holidays were scarcer than now, and perhaps half-a-dozen cricket matches were all that occurred in a whole summer, there was always some fun got up on the cricket ground after the cricket match. Running matches almost always came off, and, if the truth was told, occasionally two village "game cocks," who had a cause or ground of jealousy, would indulge in a fistic combat about some "fickle Helen." But a thing of that kind belonged to quite a past generation.

There is only one such passage of arms on record now, and it occurred within the last twenty years, when a cricketing butcher and a village Lothario, between whom a barmaid divided her smiles pretty equally, put down £10 each of their own money, and made a match for the money and the lady, who was ready to marry the winner.

All parties concerned were what is called respectable people, and all the cricketers knew about it and made the arrangements, and with the aid of a few London pugilists the affair was brought off in an adjoining county, and the butcher won after a very stiff contest, and, having received the stakes, changed his mind and is a bachelor now! The lady, who would not marry the loser, was left lamenting.

At public schools there were seldom set sports in the nature of athletic meetings, as is now the custom, and running, jumping, and pole-leaping were often the outcome of a very old-fashioned sport, "Follow my leader."

The leader, of course, was one of the most daring and able boys in the school, and the scene of action might be either across country, or in the water meadows with or without poles, and occasionally a combination of both; but whatever it was, or wherever the sport took place, it meant a real trial of pluck and endurance.

Hare and hounds is vastly preferable to running in enclosed grounds, for two reasons, first, because it does not depend on a gate; and secondly, because it tries the lasting powers of a runner in a style which may possibly be of service in real life. The chances are that the emergency may never arise which would call on any one to run a long distance across country, but the ability to do so is a good thing.

Walking is so near akin to trotting or "wobbling," as it is commonly styled, that it is apt to give rise to disputes, and is not of much value. Except in school or club contests, "running" in open handicaps often leads to disparaging remarks about an amateur favourite who does not win. One hears too often, "Mr. A. never tried, sir; knew he wouldn't, because if he had won that he would have been put back a dozen or twenty yards at the grand match at 'The Timbuctoo Grounds' next week, and *that* cup is worth winning." Directly there is a suspicion of an amateur running and not in-

tending to win, the sport is practically *dead* as regards that man. Honest emulation and the pride of victory ought to be the only objects of amateur competitors; and directly one of them "runs dark" he puts himself on the level of a second-rate professional, who runs "to orders."

The cycling in itself, either on the bicycle or tricycle, is one of the grandest inventions of modern times. It is impossible to conceive a more enjoyable or wholesome recreation than for two or three friends with a ten-pound note each in their pockets to start off for an excursion in some of the pleasantest parts of England, or even, as some of them do, abroad. The machine once bought, a man who can ride it easily is as much independent as the pedestrian, with the advantage of covering much longer distances in the day, and getting rapidly over any flat and uninteresting districts, the travelling over which on foot becomes irksome to the walking tourist.

As regards bicycle-racing, the perform-

ances of some riders are really wonderful; but it is absurd to deny that it is not often very dangerous, or to deny that there is not a great deal of betting about them. These races collect a class of people whose absence would be often much more desirable than their presence. And it is at the bicycle-races that more rumours are spread about doubts as to the riders being really amateurs than at any other. Some years ago, when steeple-chasing was a sport in which numbers of amateurs rode and won against the best jockeys in England, this question of *bonâ fide* amateurship was always cropping up. There always were rumours of owners "putting some of the so-called gentlemen jockeys on" at a hundred to nothing against his mount. Professional cyclists, of course, ride for a living, and doubtless for many of the machine-makers, for whom these races are an excellent advertisement, and a very proper one too; but there have been grave doubts about the *bonâ fides* of some so-called amateurs, who come much under the same

category as gentlemen jockeys who were paid under the name of bets.

It was a great and creditable feat for a man to have ridden from London to the Land's End and thence to John o' Groat's House, as he showed all the world to what use cycling could be put; but bicycle-racing can do no good except to "the gate," and any one who is in doubt as to whether he shall go in for it or not, had better give that doubt *against* his doing so, and leave it alone. Let him be content to advance himself in the art of riding sufficiently well to enable him to enjoy change of scene and air and rest, and be thankful; and if he likes a friendly race for distance or endurance, let him do so amongst his own friends. It is not a very dignified spectacle to see a rider at a bicycle meeting with an attendant who rubs his legs as if he were a horse, and puts him up, and gives him his orders.

There is one old English sport which is somewhat on the decline, as regards the science of it, owing to the advance of civil-

isation, and that is boxing—known to our forefathers as "the noble art of self-defence," which it *really* was. The fault about modern boxing is that it more resembles a glove-fight than the noble art. Now about glove-fighting all that can be said about it is that it is better that glove-fighting should be continued than that the old manly courageous practice of boxing in earnest should be allowed to die out altogether.

As we all know, when the world was smaller and perhaps a little rougher, the fist was the Englishman's weapon, and boys at large schools had to fight their way up, and people often settled their differences in the street; noblemen and young guardsmen would think nothing of dismounting from the drag, and engaging in a general combat with a lot of gipsies or roughs on a racecourse, and thought none the worse of each other if such a thing as a bloody nose or black eye or two was the result to any one engaged on either side.

The prize-ring was supported by many

men of rank and position, including members of either House of Legislature, and incidents of the prize-ring were often the theme of the best caricaturists and writers of the day, and of writers too.

The art of self-defence was taught as a science by ex-prize-fighters and prize-fighters of the day, and the professors "played light," as it was called—that is, they did not hit hard, but very quickly, and stopped their hand, as it were, when the glove reached the opponent's head or body. The recipient of the "blow," or rather "sharp tap," instantly acknowledged by a nod of the head, or just touching the spot with the gloves, as much as to say, "You had the best of that;" unless in giving the blow, A, the striker, left himself unguarded, and in that case probably B, a good man, would return it with interest in the face or body of A, the man who had first struck B: in other words, would "counter him."

When a boxer got his blow in and jumped away out of danger, though ready to renew the attack, he was showing the *principles* of

fighting, without the roughness and brutality of a regular fight: for, call it by what name you please, "the good old English sport," "an old-fashioned mill," or anything else, there is no doubt that after a few rounds, when the science of either man was dying out, as his blood rose in a real fight, the contest became almost a "pounding match," and in vulgar parlance it was a case of "hit for hit, and no flinching."

"Heavy pounding, gentlemen," the old Duke remarked to his staff at Waterloo during the heat of the battle. "We will see who can pound the longest."

The prize-ring, notwithstanding its surroundings, brought out many manly qualities and developed the pluck of an Englishman, and induced a great number of scions of nobility and others to support it, and to take a strong interest in boxing exhibitions, which used to be very common at the Five Courts, which was the rendezvous of all the leaders of fashion and men about town, especially during the days of the Regency.

These "benefits," as they were called, were the schools of art to prize-fighting; and the exponents of boxing were expected to show the science, and not turn it into a fight with the gloves.

In the final round, before taking off the gloves for the next comers, the boxers generally had a "rally," which was a somewhat rougher bout; but if either lost his temper, and went at his man as if he were fighting, they were immediately separated, with a possible reminder that if they *really* wished to settle any little difference, a match might be made for some future day for a genuine fistic tournament.

Now the disadvantage of modern boxing is, that probably few of those who box have ever had a regular stand-up fight for victory without the gloves, as their forefathers did; consequently they go in for a "ding, dong," hard-hitting contest *with* the gloves, forgetting that if the gloves were *not* on, and they were doing without the gloves what they were doing with the gloves, one or both

would be knocked out of time altogether. This comes of glove-fights being almost the only contests now in real earnest, and so-called professors of the noble art in public are simply giving a sample of a glove-fight sometimes, and the imitation is so like the original that it would, during its progress, be hard to "tell t'other from which."

Those who want to learn the art had better go to one of the old school who has had practical experience with and without the gloves; there are still good men of this class to be found in London.

As regards boxing itself, it is a very noble sport, and properly used, is admirable training for quickness of hand and eye, improves the wind, and finds out all the rough edges of a man's temper. And learning boxing has another advantage, for it teaches a man the use of both hands; and after a little practice the tyro will find that his left hand at all other pursuits is nearly or quite as good as his right, just as in one's old football days at school the constant playing gave great facility

of using either leg for kicking or anything else.

Brute force of any kind seldom pays; a man must always "have a little in hand" for an emergency, and expending all one's force in a blow *may* pay *if* it comes off, but if it does not the attacker is off his guard, and his balance too perhaps, and may find himself in his enemy's power. Any one by observation can see at once the superiority of skill and knack against force; the sculler, by his quick recovery and feather, can send his boat quicker through the water than the man who trusts to sheer force; the batsman, by timing a ball and a quick turn of the wrist, is master of the position; and the billiard-player, with an apparently light touch, makes the ball fly round the table with accuracy and precision.

Too much good can hardly be said of boxing as a sport—but the broadest possible line must be drawn between fighting and boxing —and the learner of the art must be especially careful never to let his temper run away with

him and induce him to transgress the laws of honour and fair-play.

To sum up the pith of the advice which I take the liberty of tendering to Young England as regards all sports, I would urge this on him, viz., that he should be very careful in following up the science and details of them; that he should ask himself constantly, "Do I feel additional pleasure in the amusement itself as I acquire additional excellence?" If his conscience tells him that he does so, all is well. If, on the contrary, he finds that his pleasure is derived in "cutting down" or "taking the shine out of" his companions, he may be sure that every step he advances is only another thorn in his own side, and that he is laying up for himself an inexhaustible store of selfishness and ill-nature—and, moreover, that he proves himself to be "no sportsman."

Test this by your own experience; run over in your own mind those whom you remember in different sports and amusements, such as the cricketer who is always

miserable about his own position, and thinks that he is not put on early enough, and ought to have been put on to bowl; the rowing-man, who is always growling about No. 2 or No. 3, or whatever the number may be, in his boat "being only a passenger, sir;" the athlete who is always declaring that he did not get a fair start; the cross old man at the club who is always "jawing" about his partner's play at whist; the "pool-player" who cries almost if his ball is "fluked in" by another player. When one sees the miserable exhibitions of temper and disappointment which men of the above stamp suffer, let us all be warned in time, and avoid any sport or amusement which tends to lead us astray, and which does not increase the pleasure of life and promote good fellowship with our brothers of the sport, be it what it may.

CHAPTER VII.

RACING AND STEEPLECHASING.

As was stated before, we all get very knowing about rowing before the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race, and very knowing about racing before the Derby.

Racing, like everything else, has multiplied to an extent which is almost incredible, and that which used to be a local sport has been turned now into a regular business; insomuch so that within the last few years two large enclosed racecourses have been established at Sandown and Kempton Park, to say nothing of the Alexandra Palace ground in the north of London; and on the slightest provocation railway companies placard half London with lists of cheap trains to any country places where races are held, and in every sporting paper at least a column is

dedicated to excursionists who want to go racewards.

Possibly there are no people in the world, except trainers, jockeys, and men who follow it as the business of life, or as a pursuit which amounts almost to a mania, who really know less about racing than the English people as a rule, or, if the truth was told, care less—barring Yorkshire men, in whom horse-racing is bred and born.

"I would do anything for you with pleasure, sir, because you so dearly love a good match," observed a worthy and excellent Yorkshire cricketer to the writer of this a few summers ago.

"Would you, George? Perhaps you would sell me a horse?"

"Aye, that I would, sir, with all my heart."

"And *do* me, George, over the deal?"

"Well, sir, I'd *try*," was the characteristic answer, made in good humour.

Rascality on the turf is no new story, as it is seventy-three years ago since Dawson was hung at Cambridge for poisoning racehorses,

and one of the first steps down hill in "The Rake's Progress," as depicted by Hogarth, is foreshadowed by a jockey bringing in a cup which he is supposed to have won for him.

In "Doctor Syntax's Tour," the Doctor is depicted as tearing his hair or his wig at seeing the favourite losing at York races; and one enclosed ground not far from London, which existed not so many years ago, was facetiously called "The Rope Walk," as, unless the place was cruelly wronged, the horses — many of them — were "pulled" or "let out" according to the ruling of the betting ring beforehand. Only small meetings, mostly hurdle races, were held at the last-named ground, and the betting-ring consisted almost entirely of the noisy outsiders, who, in all kind of coloured and parti-coloured clothes, dealt mostly in silver, and were not above disappearing if the wrong horse won.

Still there always has, and probably always will be, much fascination about racing. The writers on the subject, such as "Nimrod" and

the "Druid," have surrounded the sport with much interest, and whether any one really cares for the sport or not, it is impossible not to get interested in the accounts of the pedigrees and pure descent of celebrated horses, and anecdotes and details about their noble and other owners, and trainers, and jockeys of all ages.

And whether any one cares for racing or not as sport, there is a tremendous fascination about its surroundings to those who live in the neighbourhood of a racecourse or in the line of march.

For a few days previously the coming event gets impressed on our minds. Caravans and carts carrying roundabouts come first as a kind of advanced guard. "Punch and Judy" (getting rarer every year) appears in the garden in front of the windows when the children are at lessons and wholly upsets the governess's arrangements; and the children insist on a performance, and, of course, have their way. Master Charley, who was in the corner for very bad conduct, has bolted and

made friends with Toby publicly outside, and defies home-rule and authority until he has seen the whole exhibition from start to finish. Then in the evening we see an unusual glow across the common, and find a party of gipsies who have taken possession of a bit of waste, just under angry notice-boards threatening intruders with the law, boiling their kettle quite undisturbed, because the lord of the manor always winks at trespass in the race week. When the day actually arrives, and the stream of carts and carriages has set in, there is nothing to be done but go ourselves, and the chances are that three parts of the crowd consist of people just like ourselves, who have gone because the day is fine, and the little white canvas town in the distance looks enticing, and the niggers are singing, and the cocoa-nut and shooting-gallery business is at full swing. Sceptics may say what they please, there is a great deal more harmless fun than vice on a racecourse, and the vicious people of all classes are so many vicious people who

would be vicious somewhere else if they were not on the course.

Probably if the stewards and the promoters were to have two or three hundred horses with long legs and long tails of any ages, in a large yard, and were to send a man in to fetch out the first six or seven he could find, and put the first six or seven little men who could ride, of about the proper size, attired in brilliantly variegated caps and jackets, upon the horses, and were to parade the lot to the post, and ring a bell and start them and let them gallop down the course, and were to repeat the performance some six or eight times at intervals of half an hour or so, a great bulk of the company would go home perfectly satisfied and happy; and if they were told that they had seen Brother to Queen of the May ridden by Archer, they would believe it implicitly, even though Brother to Queen of the May was a myth, and though Archer was a hundred miles away.

There is no doubt now that the minor racing is to a great extent promoted and kept up by

sutlers and betting-men, and in the interest of innkeepers and others; but there is one great recommendation in its favour, which is that it is all done openly and in broad daylight, and is all aboveboard as regards the exhibition itself. There are a certain number of low scoundrels who are to be found at every place of meeting, be it where it may; and at the same time there are hundreds of hard-working people who turn an honest penny and are thankful to get it.

We all know what became of England when the Puritans had their full swing for a while, and after their swing was over, and for eight and twenty years after Charles II. came back. We know what happened when the Court party had their turn, and the country experienced debauchery, licentiousness, and cruelty, and superstition, and misery, and disgrace, such as were never known before.

It can very easily be imagined that to a young man of good fortune who is really fond of good horses, there can be hardly a

greater temptation than going on the turf. There is the excitement of running down to the training quarters and seeing his horses galloped; the association with men of "stable mind," who talk of nothing but horses, in which their souls delight—and the fascination of horse-talk is to a racing man as great as cricket, or fishing, or shooting are to them who follow those amusements. If he could only be quite sure of not "plunging," and would be content with one or two horses in training, he might indulge his fancy to some extent; but that extent is an unknown quantity, just like the extent of fishing-tackle which a man who is going out for a day's fishing really *wants*, and what he takes with him.

"We could never live by selling fishing-tackle to gentlemen if they only took what they really need," a celebrated maker remarked one day; "our profit is made out of what gentlemen buy and pay for which they *don't* want, and which is *no* good to

themselves or any one else, and what they *lose in the grass.*"

There are, and always have been, men of the greatest position and honour and integrity who have owned racehorses, and have won the principal races in England from time to time, and who have always, according to slang phraseology, "gone straight;" and it has sometimes occurred that men of this stamp have never bet at all—within the real meaning of the word; and so long as there is a fair supply of real grand sportsmen, who do their very best to promote pure racing, and to preserve the best blood in England, that is a sufficient reason for keeping up racing, even though only three or four noble horses were fairly ridden, and raced for honest rivalry and supremacy at Epsom or Doncaster.

The spirit of gambling is not confined to racing alone, and if racing was dead to-morrow there would be just as much gambling. The reason why so much more is seen of it on a racecourse is because it is com-

paratively a small place, into and out of which there is generally one main entry and exit, and those who want to bet get into two or three prominent places, where they can all be seen at once, so the general public see the betting men going, coming away, and on the course, and as they make most noise they attract the greater attention.

Putting down racing on the gambling question would be a great absurdity, and would be taking the bread out of thousands of mouths for the sins of comparatively a small section of the community.

The young fellow who has only recently joined a fast regiment, and thinks it the right thing to make a book in the great races, must go to the dogs in the long run; and you may depend upon it that such an one has a good many irons in the fire besides racing, and "fancies himself" at whist, ecarté, and "nap," and is not averse to a "turn with the bones." Because there are many silly young fellows of this kind, both military and civilians, in all grades of society, and because there are such

people as "the sporting (?) men," who shoot themselves after the Derby, and highly respectable (?) servants, who have lived for years in (? *on*) the family, from boyhood, who cannot account for the family plate accurately, that is not the fault of racing. The fault is in keeping loose and idle company, and wasting their lives by trying to seem very knowing about things of which they are wholly ignorant.

There is a little book called "Turf Frauds and Turf Practices; or, Spiders and Flies," by Mr. Laing-Meason (who is an utter stranger to me), which bears on the face of it the stamp of truth, and which can be tested by things which actually have occurred; and it is well worth the attention of any young man who "fancies" racing and gambling; and if the Anti-gambling Society, and the Religious Tract Society were to put that little book within the reach of all the world, they would do more practical good than by preaching a crusade against gambling and betting, illustrated by little anecdotes, and impossible pictures, con-

veying morals attempting to show that Tommy became a prosperous man because he resisted Billy's request to go to races, and that Billy became a thief and a convict because he went. It is all nonsense. Billy would probably have been a thief and a convict anyhow, whether he went to the races or not. Hogarth's "Jack Idle" found that some halfpence jingled on a tombstone and the company of the one-eyed sweep just as easy a way to ruin as the turf.

There is no secret in the fact that amongst a large section of men who own horses many keep and run them for the sole purpose of making money, and they "scratch" them or not as it suits them. That is the present morality of the turf since racing has become an everyday pastime.

See what a lottery the whole thing is. The Derby stakes now amount in round numbers to about five thousand pounds, subscribed by owners of horses, who pay fifty pounds each to run, and twenty-five pounds forfeit if they do not; and the race comes off,

sometimes less than twenty or even fifteen going to the post.

All the horses which are entered have either been bred or bought by the owners, very many as yearlings at a high price; and when they become two years old it is a toss up whether they are worth thirty pounds or thirty hundred pounds.

Now let us see what fair and legitimate betting is, without touching on the question of its morality or advisability. Fair betting is, in the light of an investment, at a *certain* risk. Say that A. has a very promising two-year old, which is entered for his first race, in which the stakes are not of great value. A. runs the horse as an experiment to try his temper and power when in company with other horses, and he has a perfect right to say to his jockey, "That horse is not to be pressed or overstrained; I want you to try his speed and power, and set him going if he wants to; but on no account ride him out. Don't '*rope* him,' and don't distress him. If he can carry you in let him."

Now, surely this is all fair and aboveboard; for you can't expect a man to risk a valuable property for sentiment, and to have a horse whipped and spurred to death for the sake of securing a barren victory which may ruin the horse.

This is just a case in which a lot of noodles, who have chosen to back A.'s horse, say—"The brute was never tried—the jock. sat down upon him and never moved."

Now, take the other case. Suppose A.'s horse could win easily, and the jockey rode to his orders, and "let the horse carry him in." Assuming it was entered for one or two important races, the bookmakers who are always wanting as many horses as possible to lay against, may bring the horse prominently forward, and next morning we shall see in the betting lists that A.'s horse was much inquired after, and that towards the close a leading bookmaker offered 25 to 1 in hundreds (taken) against him for some engagement. Let us assume that A.'s commissioner was the taker. Now what has A.

done? He has added £100 to his racing account to be charged, so to say, against the horse, with a certainty of pocketing £2500 if he wins the named race; and should he win it, probably all costs of the horse, from its first becoming A.'s property, are paid. And mark you, should the horse be in the next year's Derby, A. will get long odds against him for that race.

Let us go a little farther, and assume that A., having made up his mind to back the horse for five hundred pounds, all told, in his different engagements—if the horse breaks down the money is gone; but if the horse wins one, or even two, or three of his races, or gets a place for which he has been backed, A. is safely landed.

Now, supposing that the trainer advises A. to give the horse a rest and not to run him at the next meeting, after winning one or two good races, unless he appears *very* fit to run a day or two before; and that the day before the meeting the trainer says, "I would not run him, sir," and that A. says,

"Run your pen through his name"—the moment that the horse is scratched a clamour arises from a noisy party of young "noodles" (I rather like that word), sporting (?) publicans, gentlemen's gentlemen, city clerks, &c. &c., who, knowing nothing of racing, have "put the pot on the horse," as they call it, and backed it to win, and write down A. as a swindler. Why, the whole of A.'s transactions, from beginning to end, have been as fair and honourable as those of the most scrupulous city merchant in the world.

Now for a second case of fair and legitimate betting. B. is a barrister, or in some other profession, or in commerce perhaps, born and bred in the country and amongst horses in his childhood, who if he could have had his own way as a boy would have gone into a racing stable, just as Leech's young Hopeful in *Punch* informs his parent or guardian that he, in choosing a profession, would like to be a clown in a circus. B., against his wish and in spite of himself—no, *not* exactly that; let us say, using his energy

and brains in a channel which he did not originally choose—has prospered and become rich. Shut out by his duties from active participation in the sports which he most loved, the old fire has not died out, and in his leisure hours over his cigar he has read an account of every great race in England, and possibly knows as much about the pedigree and performances of celebrated racehorses of all classes, as very many of the oldest hands on the turf. He will talk to you by the hour about horses which ran from the date of the first Derby onwards; about the great jockeys, owners, and trainers; and very likely will communicate to you confidentially that he means just to run down on the quiet to Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood, Doncaster, or wherever the races may be.

Now B. is one of those men who means having his fun for his money, and who never bets unless he is on the course and "sees the numbers up," and then backs his opinion. B. arrives on the course, and goes on to the lawn, or whatever the place may be, and is

known as well as the clerk of the course himself, though perhaps he does not go five times in the year; but he has a certain presence and cheery look which once seen are never forgotten, and he *always* bets.

B. is a backer, and never exceeds a certain sum—say five or ten pounds—on a win, or perhaps a place, on every race, and B. is popular. The bookmakers all know him, and give him a hearty greeting: "Good morning, Mr. B.; no good talking to you till the numbers are up;" and directly the numbers are up B.'s business is quickly transacted. "How much against Bumble Bee for a win? now how much against Hornet for a place?" One or both bets are made and taken against B.'s stake, and then B.'s very soul is in the race. His mind is not on Bumble Bee and Hornet, but on their ancestors. He knows the pedigree of both, as he is thinking of the Eclipse, or Smolensko, or Sweetmeat, or Whalebone blood, or whatever the blood may be, and has seen the horse galloped, and knows pretty well the character of the owner,

trainer, and jockey before he bets. The bookmakers say, "It is a pleasure to lose or win a trifle to Mr. B.; for if the horse is fairly ridden he is satisfied, and *enjoys* paying if he *loses*." If you meet B. the day after the race, he will tell you with admirable good-humour that he had a bad day, and made five bets and lost them all, but it was no fault of the horses or jockeys. He is very pleased when he wins; and probably at the year's end his book is not of much account either way, as he never "plunges" or varies his stake.

Now these examples of Mr. A. and Mr. B. are no exaggerated specimens of real men who are the salt of the earth; and against the deeds of either no one except a fanatic, who thinks that the world ought only to be a sad vale of tears, can say a word. They choose to keep as a pastime the study of a sport in which their hearts delight, and they know perfectly well that they are quite safe against any temptation to "plunge."

At the same time, the best advice to give a youngster is *don't* bet at all, except a

shilling or so for fun, under any circumstances, as the temptations are tremendous.

The very expression "horse-racing" declares what the meaning of the sport is or ought to be—a trial of courage, speed, and endurance. The evil of the whole of the present system is that racehorses cost such a large sum to keep, and good ones fetch such an enormous price, that those who go in for racing cannot allow their capital to lie idle in the shape of two-year olds; and it is a notorious fact that a great number of horses never stand the training, and become useless weeds. Legislation is practically impossible. The concensus of opinion in both Houses of the Legislature is that everything connected with racing should be left to the Jockey Club; and the Jockey Club has very small powers in a national point of view.

Turning to the black side of the turf, it is impossible to conceive a greater congregation of blackguards and scoundrels than the bad portion of those who use the turf for swindling purposes. The men who combine to get

possession of a good horse, which they do—as money *will* do anything—and use him for the sole purpose of robbing the public, are precisely on the same footing as burglars, though possibly a little worse of the two, as the burglar runs the risk of penal servitude or of a couple of bullets in him, but the turf swindler does his wickedness with impunity. The only thing to be said about it is that those who lose their money have only themselves to blame for it. Why do they bet about horses of which they know nothing?

The answer is simply because they want to make money without working for it. Those who want to judge for themselves must go and judge for themselves, and drop into a sporting (?) public-house near a large factory during the dinner hour and listen to our friend the working man's conversation after a Derby day; or come up in a third-class carriage with them after a race, what do you hear?

"Why, he sat down on 'im like a sack of beans, and never moved or used whip or spur; it was a regular plant, and Bill Johnson

told me all about it; aye! and I lost a dollar and a-'alf over it."

Or go into a luncheon place where the city clerks assemble, *i.e.*, the young fellows who play "nap" in the trains of a morning, and frequent low public billiard-rooms, and you will hear the same kind of idle talk.

And whenever a fast young fellow gets into trouble, and the excuse is that he was ruined by horse-racing, it is simply a lie; the fact is, that he was an idle, conceited young fool, who talked about and meddled with things which were no concern of his, and he has gone to the bad his own way. The question as to the enormous sums paid to jockeys is one quite outside the scope of this book. That is entirely one between owners and their *employés*.

The extravagant payment is much the same all over the world now. A young unknown man may be acting or singing at some little theatre, and some hidden qualities may be discovered and come to light, and he may make such a mark that every London manager

is after him, and from comparative poverty he finds himself suddenly in affluence. The late Mr. Robson's career, I believe, was an example of this kind. The late Mr. Sothern had what was intended as a walking gentleman's part as "Lord Dundreary," and he made it a "part," and "crammed" the theatre every night, and could command his own terms.

The late Charles Dickens commenced "Pickwick"—the first number of which I took in as a boy—under very unpromising auspices. It was recorded that under a thousand copies was the result of the first issue, and that it hung fire during the first few numbers. He created "Sam Weller," and was the lion of the literary world, and his success was determined. A wholly unknown Scotch artist, who came to the South of England, painted a picture, which was prominently hung on the line at the Academy, of a "Country Cricket Match in Sussex," which created a *furore* equal to any created by Wilkie's pictures, and at once became eminent.

The fact is that there is no success like success, and the price of success is an unknown quantity.

As to steeplechasing, hurdle-racing would better define it now. To learn about steeplechasing of the past, the best plan is to go to Aylesbury or St. Albans, and talk to some grey-headed old patriarch about the grand times of real steeplechasing in the days of Captain Ross (still alive), Osbaldeston, Dick Christian, and later on of Jem Mason and Lord Strathmore and Mr. Peter Rolt, and Captain Peel (very recently dead), and Captain Little, and the men of that day—some forty years ago—and about Gay Lad, Cigar, Lottery, the Switcher, and British Yeoman. There is not much of a line to be drawn now between a steeplechase horse and a racehorse.

Occasionally in country places there is a hunt steeplechase run by horses *bonâ fide* hunted during the season; and a very strict lookout has to be kept against the entry of some long-legged weed, ridden by a nonde-

script owner, half farmer's son, half jockey, which has been sent out occasionally with the hounds for qualification. If public steeple-chasing wholly died out it would be no loss, and in suburban meetings the vilest robberies and swindles have been perpetrated through them. So, as a last word about racing, we may say, that whether good or bad in the main, if it was discontinued we should lose a great deal of good old English fun, we should be deprived of seeing the real descendants by blood of horses whose names have been household words in England. Whether it depends on horse-racing or not is a problem for learned men to solve, but one thing is certain, which is, that we possess in England now the finest horses in the world. Any one looking carefully into the make and shape and power of our draught-horses, especially the heavy draught-horses, can see how good blood has improved the breed. So the common-sense view of the case seems to be, "Let us rest and be thankful," and let fools who gamble ruin them-

selves if they please—it is no affair of yours or mine; and depend upon it, if racing was abolished to-morrow, the world would be no better for it, and might be a great deal worse, for what is done now is done *coram populo*.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNTING.

DID not we commence by saying that there is nothing new under the sun? As things now are, but for careful preservation and occasional importation of foxes, the noble art of foxhunting would be a thing of the past, as the surface of the country has been so totally altered, and civilisation has advanced so rapidly, that the natural wild haunts of the fox have been seriously interfered with.

The importation of foxes is not of modern origin. In that most charming of all English books, "The Spectator," we read of the exploits of Sir Roger de Coverley, the old county squire of Queen Anne's days, and the terror of foxes, which suffered most when the fair widow, who was always in his thoughts, was fickle; for as Addison writes:—

"The perverse widow caused the death of several foxes; for Sir Roger has told me that in the course of his amours he patched the western door of his stable. Whenever the widow was fickle the foxes were sure to pay for it."

And he continues:—

"The constant thanks of and good wishes of the neighbourhood always attended him on account of his remarkable enmity towards foxes, having destroyed more of these vermin in one year than it was thought the whole county could have produced. Indeed, the knight does not scruple to own among his most intimate friends that in order to establish his reputation in this way he has secretly sent for great numbers of them out of other counties, which he used to turn loose about the country at night, that he might better signalise himself by their destruction the next day. His hunting-horses were the finest and best managed in these parts; his tenants are still full of the praises of a grey Stone-horse that unhappily staked himself

several years since, and was buried with great solemnity in the orchard."

The "old fox-hunting squires" is now a term of *opprobrium* used by those of the modern socialistic school, who sneer at all the country sports which were supported by our forefathers for the amusement of themselves and their neighbours, amongst whom they passed their lifetime, and lived on their estates, instead of spending a great part of the year in London or on the Continent.

Those who did not see the old days of fox-hunting before railways existed can read the most graphic accounts of the joys of the chase in "Nimrod," and in the charming writings of Whyte-Melville and Kingsley, and in the poems of the former of the two last named.

The sport has changed with the times. The old-fashioned hunter has given place to horses of a much lighter breed, and the "two-horse" school, who have a second horse out.

Except in those favoured districts where there are private packs, such as those of the

late Assheton Smith, who owned three packs, and hunted six days a week entirely at his own expense—and as the present Duke of Beaufort, the Duke of Rutland, and a few others still do—hunting depends entirely on subscription packs and the good-will of the gentry and farmers, and in many counties the parsons too.

But though fashions have changed, the same big-heartedness of the fox-hunters of old seems still to exist even in this artificial age. Men who hunt are generally good fellows, and although some of them do not conceal the fact that they like a good gallop after a thirty or forty mile ride by railway, and the great expense of sending horses on, and are perhaps more impatient than the last generation were in "hunting their fox and catching their fox," as the old huntsmen used to say; still, men who have the time and the money, and who, according to modern phraseology, hunt from London or any other city, and who subscribe liberally to the hunt, have much to do with keeping up the sport.

Money is the mainspring of success in hunting, as in most other sports, and those who have not money and who reside in the country, can give money's worth by using all their influence towards preserving the foxes and keeping the old women who lose a goose or a chicken or two occasionally in good-humour, and by having a puppy at walk.

Though the farmers grumble a little at times, and are justly wrath against the shabby fellows who not only are unknown in the county, but who do not subscribe to the hounds, galloping over their crops, still probably they would come forward very promptly if any attempt was made to stop hunting, as it brings in a good deal of money.

The country would not be properly "furnished" in the winter if it was not lit up sometimes by the pretty scene of the hunt sweeping by, and the cheery sound of the rating of the huntsman, the crack of the whip, and the sound of the horn.

Besides enabling a large number of people

to get "a pull" out of the hunting, it is the cause of a good deal of money being spent, and creates a great amount of good fellowship amongst all classes. The old fire is still a-light, and the chances are very great that any one going into the market, or to the farmer's ordinary on market-day, will find the conversation running on fox-hunting, and many a fox dies again over the friendly chat in the smoking-room before it is time to go home.

If you meet the parson's children out in the lanes in some parts of the shire, the chances are that they have a foxhound puppy with them, and although he may be the most mischievous "little cuss" in the world, as the cook calls him, and has even been detected running round the garden with the cook's Sunday cap and chocolate-coloured front attached thereto, the puppy is forgiven, for if the hounds are going home, and the huntsman and whips stop at the Vicarage for a glass of beer, you may be sure that they have many compliments for the cook, as gallantry

always goes hand-in-hand with a red coat, and a huntsman is, as regards servants, in the same position as a duke is to his brother peers.

As to the preservation of foxes, when it is known that a "lady fox" has done us the honour of presenting our parish with a litter of cubs, the neighbours (metaphorically speaking) take care that the knocker shall be tied up, and the tan laid down as if mistress fox was a duchess who had presented her most noble husband with a son and heir in the town mansion in London. And every good mother who is born and bred in the country-side says to her little boy, "Tommy, there be a vixen and cubs i' the 'ood; if thou goes near she, I'll take a stick and larrup thee, so that thee shan't sit down wi'out crying for a week."

And Tommy obeys his mother and keeps away from the wood, and some weeks afterwards he is taken to a point of vantage, from which, looking through the bushes, he sees the cubs at play; and when the parson comes to see his mother, and the good woman says,

"Tommy, you tell his reverence what thee see'd i' the 'ood," Tommy looks up with his blue china Saxon eyes staring out of his head, which is covered with a small furze bush of nearly white Saxon hair, and taking his finger out of his mouth, answers, "I zee the little voxes." And Tommy, after a pat on the head, and a possible penny from the parson, is commended, as is his mother, for his being brought up to honour the fox.

Our parish, did I say? well, let it stand, as it reminds me of my village home in the broad down country of Wiltshire, in the middle of Assheton Smith's hunt, which was so familiar to me in childhood, and when the people "ate fox, drank fox, thought fox, and slept fox."

Possibly visions of the past rise up in brighter colours than the realities of to-day; but it always seems, on reflection, that the hunt was a thing which a county was proud of, and one seldom heard of a huntsman or "whip" disgracing himself. There is no place where a disagreeable, rude, vulgar fel-

low can make himself more odious than in the hunting-field. Hunting has always been a royal sport, and a mighty leveller too, as it does not matter who or what a man is, if he is a good sportsman and rides straight, and observes the rules of good-breeding and courtesy.

Some busy people in Parliament are constantly complaining and trying to put down the Queen's staghounds, as they are trying to put down everything else which amuses other people. Whether hunting the stag is a cruel pursuit or not is quite beside the question: the people who raise objections on that score do not mind eating crimped cod, or lobsters and prawns, which are boiled alive. There are many excellent and good people who, from honest conviction, have a rooted objection to every kind of sport which gives pain, and such people ought to be listened to whether we agree with them or not, but the humanitarian-mongers raise their protest from sheer ill-nature.

There was a curious and perfectly true case

of harmless stag-hunting in Hampshire. Mr. Neville, who lived in or near Winchester, had a few staghounds and some deer who lived together in perfect harmony—in fact, as the present Warden of Winchester, who communicated these details, said, "They knew each other at home," as Winchester boys used to say of brother schoolfellows who lived in the same county and neighbourhood.

When a stag-hunt was proposed, the stag was taken to the place of meeting, and like the horse—

"Liber et exultans latis equus ardet in Agris,"

the stag finding himself at liberty bounded away into space. After so many minutes' law the staghounds were laid on—there were very few of them—and away they ran to find their old friend. Those who were in at "the take," as it ought to have been according to stag-hunting law, were surprised to find "the family party" in perfect harmony, all the better for the fresh air and a morning breather, and doubtless in better health and

with a finer appetite for their exercise, and perfectly ready and willing to "punish Mr. Neville's victuals" on their return home.

The story, which is perfectly true, much resembles dear old Sir Roger de Coverley's "stop-hounds," which were stopped on the huntsman throwing down his pole, thus described by Addison ("The Spectator"):—

"They (the hounds) were now within eight yards of that game which had been pursued for almost as many hours. Yet on the signal before mentioned (throwing down the pole) they all came to a sudden stand, and although they continued opening much as before, dared not one attempt to pass beyond the pole. At the same time Sir Roger rode forward, and alighting, took up the hare in his arms, which he soon delivered to one of his servants, with an order if she could be kept alive to let her go into his great orchard, where it seems he has several of them prisoners of war."

As regards "The Spectator's" account of Sir Roger's "prisoners of war," I take the charming sentiments of Mr. Addison with

thankfulness, in respect of his kindly feeling in pointing a tender moral, and adorning a tale; but I fancy that natural historians might take exceptions to the existence of a hare after eight hours' coursing (*i.e.*, as regards the case of the historical hare which Mr. Spectator saw coursed) being received with open arms by a miscellaneous society which lived within the walls of an orchard, and whether the new arrival might not be set on by the other hares.

This is, however, a question for naturalists; but just as the stricken deer is supposed to have been gored to death by his "brethren of the antler," so one may suppose that a "blown" and half-mangy hare with his flick all ruffled up, thrust into a society of prosperous hares, strangers to himself, might not have been looked on like a gentleman who came to a set dinner-party in dirty jack-boots and a short pipe in his mouth, and have been treated accordingly. Again a question arises for naturalists, whether, unless a special table-d'hôte was provided them, a com-

pany of miscellaneous hares could be kept and flourish in Sir Roger de Coverley's great orchard, where they would have no change of food.

However, don't let us be hypercritical; for in these prosy days we cannot afford to "water" or "discount" the charming character of Sir Roger, who was one of the greatest creations of the brains of Steele and Addison.

So the moral about hunting is this: It is a grand old national sport, and all those who follow it should do so humbly and reverently, as a science—for a science it is. The "odora canum vis" described by Virgil in his graphic story of Mrs. Dido's hunting-party to Æneas (who certainly behaved infamously to the injured queen), who "scored" when she cut Æneas when she met him in "Hades," answers exactly as regarded the stag or wild boar to the policy of an old-fashioned huntsman who "hunt their fox and catch their fox." The wild boy home from school, who gallops along on a pony as mad as himself, and who terrifies the old Squire (the master

and the boy's grandfather), until the old huntsman says, "Leave him alone, Squire, he is just like what *you* were"—answers to or tallies exactly with Virgil's description of the boy Ascanius, who rode ahead at Mrs. Dido's hunting-party and "cracked his whip" (*insonuitque flagello*).

Again, we must remember how when boys we were delighted at the story of Æneas bringing down his venison with his bow and arrows, and the account of the jolly supper which his half-starved comrades had in the evening; and also of his meeting his mother, the goddess Venus, attired as a huntress, and the cheery greeting:

> "Heus! inquit juvenes monstrate mearum,
> Vidistis si quam hic errantem forte sororum,
> Succinctam pharetrâ et maculosæ tegmine lyncis."

There is a go in the whole story like the grand crash of a band.

Virgil was a rare old sportsman, and there is a deal of the "ring of the woodlands and merry echo of the sporting country" when he

writes of the sports, even though he introduces his mythological heroes and heroines in the shape of gods and goddesses of the lowest possible morals, and reading his "Bucolics" is almost as good as a day in the country.

So again you see there is nothing new under the sun, Q.E.D. Therefore let us all agree that hunting as a manly and social sport shall *never* cease, whether we can follow it ourselves now or not. Even if we come down to rats, there is a deal of science and sport in fair rat-hunting in a barn.

There is an institution now utterly numbered with the past, viz., a scratch village pack of harriers. There was such a thing in my youth in my father's village, where the farmers kept a few hounds, class and pedigree unknown. One kept a couple, another three, and so on. All the owners of hounds were masters. It was very good fun, and they managed to kill a hare now and then, and a village dog or two joined if disposed, and a fight between the tinker's dog and one of the

noble pack was not unknown. The *locus in quo* was a village situated on the Dover Road in the coaching days, and I think "The Goose and Dumpling Hunt," which appeared in *Bell's Life*, must have been taken from our hunt. I was a little boy of about eight years old at the time, and followed them on a donkey.

One thing only is to be remembered, which is, that any man who hunts and does not pay the utmost he can afford to that noble sport is no sportsman.

On the other hand, a keen huntsman, who hunts pretty frequently, when he gets the chance, in *his own* county, and amongst his own neighbours, and who does his best to maintain order in the field by example, and who rides straight, and who sends his ten pounds to the master with an *honest* regret that he can afford no more, is much more regarded *as* a sportsman by the master than the man who brings down a string of horses and sends his cheque for five and twenty or fifty pounds, whereas he could afford a couple

of hundred, because he gives the least he can.

It is no good calling the writer a *pessimist* for putting the fact in print; but it is nevertheless *true* that very often, as regards public amusements, the case is that the longer and heavier the purse the tighter are the strings.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOOTING.

"O PIETAS, O prisca fides," where is the late Mr. E. H. Budd's celebrated pointer Mungo, whose virtues are now historic? Listen—

"One day on the Downs at Brighton Mungo made a point," says Mr. Budd (*crede* Mr. Wheeler's "Sportiscrapiana," p. 36). "I watched him for ten minutes or more, during the whole time of which I could see a fly on his nose; but so staunch was the dog that, though his foot was up and near the fly the whole time I was watching, he never offered to brush off the fly. On my walking up and flushing the game (partridges), I found the fly had so stung the dog all the time as to leave a lump of congealed blood on his nose."

And again, as regards the qualities of Mungo's descendants, listen to a letter from

Osbaldeston, the prince of sportsmen, to Mr. Budd, who, by the by, must be introduced as Mr. E. H. Budd, the celebrated cricketer, runner, athlete, and shot, who died about seven years since, *ætat.* 91; who played his first match at Lord's in 1802; and who shot a fair lot of birds in September when nearer ninety than eighty-five years old—

"You will be pleased to hear that two of Flirt and Mungo's whelps will be the best in England—Mark and Flirt II. by name. They are only sixteen months old, and Mr. Craddock offered me fifty pounds for Mark the first day he saw him out. He said that he never saw such a dog in his life. He thought Flirt quite equal to him, and the two cheap at a hundred. He really would have given me fifty pounds for Mark."

Readers will remember the celebrated poem of Cowper's—

"Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind," &c.,

in which his dying hope is that "his faithful

dog will bear him company" in the happy hunting-grounds. Just such a spirit pervaded our ancestors, who hunted their game and shot it, whether with pointers in the stubbles—with spaniels in thick hedgerows and springs and woods—with beagles after rabbits, a most exciting sport when the rabbit-holes were stopped, though a little bloodthirsty when, as has been known, the shooters were posted at intervals in trees, which they ascended by a ladder. It was very like the Massacre of the Huguenots, when the young king took "pot shots" at the flying victims from a window. Still, don't you see in the records of good sport which lived in many memories and in game-books, the dogs were always "honourably mentioned" in the despatches as well as the list of killed and wounded? Now the world is utterly different *quà* shooting; and shooting has become simply a rich man's luxury.

This last remark is not made in any ill-natured or democratic spirit (quite against the writer's ideas).

The change has arisen from pure necessity and from altered circumstances, owing to the enormous growth of population throughout England and the world in consequence of the increase of railways and other means of easy transit having been made into a kind of "hotch-pot" instead of a country separated into hundreds and perhaps thousands of districts. In fact, the world in England, instead of consisting as it did of innumerable "dumplings," has become what the Americans would call "an almighty big pudding." On the above account the metamorphosis into a big pudding has made game and shooting rights very much restricted and very carefully guarded, and there is no *quasi*-neutral wild districts for game to run in indiscriminately except moors, which of course are carefully preserved.

Now, as a practical and true solution of this question, and especially as to the reason for the change; and, speaking in the first person, I will explain it all as regards wild shooting, such as wild fowl, snipe shooting,

and the like, illustrating my narration by named localities of which I will speak. From Gillingham Marshes close to Chatham—on the London, Chatham, and Dover line—down to Faversham on the same railway, lies a large tract of wild marsh land, in former days quite outside civilisation. This wild marsh land fronted the North Sea, the site of it being from any point ten to twelve miles or so from the Nore as the crow flies. This tract used to be a great smuggling district.

This tract of marsh land in hard winters was the favourite resort of every kind of water-fowl, and it was not an uncommon thing for a shooter to bring home some bird whose name and country were unknown. The district being comparatively uninhabited, there being only a few villages here and there, whose notoriety was more occasioned by constant smuggling and periodical ague than by anything else, there was no restriction to shooting over those marshes, which extended over quite or nearly twenty miles of sea or rather river board. No one could

go there with impunity who did not know the marshes well, as they were all slob-land with sea-walls and passages, which were safe enough to all who knew their way, but almost certain death to those who did not know it, and who got flurried and lost their heads, and so added one or two more to the numberless victims who had been lost in the marsh and overtaken by the tide. Now throughout this large track of marsh land any one who chose might shoot. In a long day's stalk, the chances were that you might run across a small party of officers from Chatham or Sheerness, and a few of the noble order of roughs, who were sometimes armed with discarded muskets, picked up cheap at Chatham, which they loaded from a glass bottle and a handful of something which they took out of their pockets, which on examination turned out to be the bowl of a tobacco-pipe full of powder taken from the bottle, and two pipe-bowls of shot. This slight sketch shows how little the right of shooting was valued in that district.

Again, in the same part of the county of Kent there was little or no game-preserving, and there was much rough and *quasi* common land over which any one almost might range; and there were pretty many scoundrels from the neighbourhood of Chatham Hill, which was notorious for the scum of the earth, who were half smugglers, half poachers, and purveyors of rats and badgers for officers in the garrison who wanted to try their "dawgs," or any blackguardism which might turn up; and who were lions at an election, when they would hocus and cart away voters, smash up a polling place, or do anything ruffianly for beer and money.

Now "*ex uno disce omnes.*" Just to show how times are changed since population has increased, and facilities of locomotion have sprung up, in that very same district, if any one goes in a boat on the seaward side, and shoots any bird which falls on land which belongs to the lord of the manor and goes to pick it up, so surely he is "nobbled" and brought before the magistrates, and as surely

as he is brought up, so surely he is convicted for trespass and fined, as foreshore rights are very keenly disputed all along the Medway river, and much litigation has arisen about them.

Again, in some of the districts of Surrey which are subject to floods, here and there are water meadows and fresh-water slob-lands, which in hard winters are much frequented by snipe and also wild duck, the reason being very obvious, as along the source of the Wandle river water is hard to freeze, and very seldom does freeze except when stagnant and isolated from the streams.

Now, over the districts such as have been named, the owners or lessees who lease these tracts of slob-land would no more give their best friend leave to shoot unless accompanied by themselves than they would fly. The reason of their apparent selfishness is, because they happen to possess what money will not buy; and what they *do* possess is precarious as regards the chance of enjoyment, as a day's

snipe and duck shooting comes perhaps once or twice a year, and not always that.

Every one who understands about duck and snipe shooting must be aware that the ground must be very quiet until the duck and snipe have settled down; and a very few days' sport can only be expected.

The fact is that natural game has been and is becoming scarcer and scarcer—calling wild-fowl game for the sake of this argument. The cover for game, owing to the reaping machines, abolition of thick hedgerows and the like, have destroyed almost all the natural haunt for flick or feather, and consequently artificial breeding and rearing pheasants under hens has been resorted to, and men are not unreasonably selfish in denying their shooting to any but their own intimate friends and relations. And when leave is given, oftener than not it is reciprocal; and A., who gives B. a day over his marsh-lands when the snipe and duck are up, gets a good day's general shooting from B., who has the facilities for that amusement.

'Again, let us look at this side of the question. In very many districts large tracts of unproductive woodland have been cleared and sold, and turned to other purposes, and the result has been that the natural cover for game is becoming less and less every day, and those who want what is called "a head of game" can only do so by the most religious preserving, and at a great expense, otherwise they would have no game to speak of. Hence has arisen the modern system—not quite modern either—of the strictest preservation of game; and shooting has become almost a rich man's luxury.

The scandal about game is the fact, and the notorious fact, of large landowners incurring odium for outrageous excess in game-preserving, and paying for their selfish luxury by sending their game to London and other large cities for sale, and shutting up every path in the parish against their neighbours, and driving them on to the roads, and depriving them of all the pleasure of the woods, which their fathers

and forefathers enjoyed for perhaps a century.

If wealthy proprietors like to have partridges driven, and shoot as many in a couple of days as would have satisfied their forefathers for a whole season, they have a perfect right to do so, as the partridges are theirs; but as regards pheasants the case is different, as the scandal consequent on wholesale poaching, attacks on keepers, with murder as an incident to the poaching, is a scandal, because the owners set the example of selfishly occupying the whole parish, and often most *illegally* stopping up footpaths and robbing their poorer neighbours of the innocent pleasures arising from "ranging the forest free"—in which forest they would do no harm—for the sake of a sensation day two or three times in the season by means of a wholesale slaughter in the woods.

This style is neither English nor any other sport; it is an arbitrary abuse of position and wealth for selfish amusement, so called, and it must be fairly said that the "new men" who

have occupied "the old acres," and who have ousted the original proprietors—whose ship went down when corn and agricultural produce gave way to the more successful competition of trade and extended commerce—have not by any means been guiltless of the present mania for making game and game-preserving a selfish thing.

Men have a perfect right in killing their game as they please, and using two guns, and having hot luncheon brought out, and waggonettes full of ladies to join them in their *al fresco* meal, if it is *their* idea of our English sport.

As regards the poachers—that is, the town gangs—they ought to be hunted down like the brigands, for they are the veriest scoundrels in creation, and nothing too bad can be said of them; but it must be remembered that the existence of this class is occasioned by the excessive over-preserving, as when they go out they want a sack or perhaps two sacks full of game to repay them, as a good many middle men stand in, either

for services rendered, or for holding their tongues.

The "going a-fowling" with a dog and a gun was known in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, as will be seen by reference to Rubens' picture of "The Chateau de Stein" in the National Gallery. In the foreground of this picture is an old sportsman with a heavy-looking blunderbuss kind of gun, and holding back a dog spaniel or setter —breed not clearly defined. He has got within a few yards of some partridges on a knoll, and according to the perspective, if he does get a shot at them sitting, as clearly is his intent, he will kill them and roast them all at once, as he must set them on fire or blow them into "never." Shooting birds on the wing was a rare art in Queen Anne's time, as the so doing is called in Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley" "*shooting flying*," and is recorded as a novelty. It could not have been common in George II.'s reign, as in Fielding's and Smollett's works it is spoken of as an exceptional thing.

When the Pigeon-Shooting Bill was brought forward by Mr. Anderson, and occasioned the very worst and most illogical debate ever heard in Parliament perhaps, as it consisted mostly of platitudes, truisms, and exaggeration, without any definite line of argument, Mr. R. T. Reid, M.P., the Admirable Crichton of Oxford in his time, who was brilliantly distinguished for athletics and scholarship, made *the* speech of the day, and ridiculed the idea of a sliding scale of cruelty and non-cruelty, and said that if any honourable member would bring in a bill for abolishing the *battue* and all other artificial means of capturing game otherwise than by fairly hunting for it and shooting it, he would gladly support it in the interest of English sport.

One honourable member, who inveighed bitterly against the immorality of the betting at pigeon-matches *plus* the cruelty, was almost violently eulogistic about the artificial clay pigeon, which is nothing more nor less than a kind of twisted flower-pot saucer which twirls and gyrates when thrown up by

a spring, forgetting that the betting on the artificial pigeon was precisely as great as against the real bird.

Now, as to facts, without a single word in favour of pigeon-shooting. The facts are these: At the Gun Club grounds and similar places which are frequented by noblemen and gentlemen of position, the cruelty is comparatively *nil* to that occasioned by the *battue*. The time taken by the trapper handling the bird, putting it in the trap, pulling the string, down to the moment when the retriever deposits the bird dead close to the shooter's feet is about 16 to 20 *seconds*, whereas the time from the moment that the hare or pheasant first receives its charge of shot till its death *may* be sometimes hours or days. For facts are stubborn things; and when one has seen days after a *battue* a poor hare trailing its hind legs miserably across a drive, or a pheasant scuttling away with its wing down, it can only occur from one cause.

As regards the skill of shooting, no man but a good shot ever makes a large bag at a

battue, and of course no matter how numerous the quarry, a man must hold straight to win, just as no man ever gets a hundred runs at cricket unless he has a very quick hand and eye, no matter whether the bowling is bad or good. Most people who were born and bred in the country, no matter how long they may have lived elsewhere, like to see the game; but they, the ex-countrymen, who would have done anything to help the squire and old Ramrod, his keeper—for probably there was only one at the manor-house, in days gone by—are just those now who say, when an anti-game law raid is made in Parliament, Let the game-laws go; we don't care because a few landowners have seized the rural districts wholly. And their arbitrary conduct is just on a par with the tyranny of the old forest laws, which forbade people to keep hounds unless their claws were cut.

Much as the ex-countrymen, who are loyal to the core as regards the sports of the country and the enjoyment by landowners of the rights and amenities of their estates, hate

the blatant vestrymen in black satin waistcoats and black cloth boots, who slobber over their 'are soup, and make violent speeches about the game-laws and against the rights of property, they will be found very lukewarm in support of any game-law movement unless there is a little more concession shown towards allowing the villagers to enjoy their old rights of way, and the old privileges of walking through the woods in beaten paths as their ancestors did.

What has caused this change of feeling in the ex-countrymen is because, amongst others, they suffer most of all. "Dear Christian friends," as the tub-thumpers say, you have never probably as young men known the misery of green sickness and prostration of mind and body from being caged up in London in times when there were no Saturday holidays and there were no cheap trains, and the very thought of green fields and woods was to one's mind as painful as the babbling of a rippling stream would be to a man dying of thirst and prostrate just out of reach of

running water. If you had lived in these days, and had taken a short holiday, you would have realised the ever-blessed feeling of getting away alone into the woods, or by some shady nook near the river, and of throwing yourself on the ground and allowing your mind to be fresh tuned to the full enjoyment of the harmony of nature, and of feeling health and happiness stealing over you, and of waking up in your right mind. We—speaking for a class to which I belong, that is, the ex-countrymen who are confined to London,—in many parts of England are now suffering banishment from every old haunt in the interest of the pheasant, who is a quarrelsome foreigner, half Colchian, half heathen Chinee, with a dash of the old barn-door in him perhaps.

Going back again to our early home, we expect to find faces and landmarks wholly changed; we are not surprised at finding a swell railway tavern in the place of the old "Barley Mow," with its old brick floor and highback settle which surrounded the rooms, with only one small place of entry and exit on

the side of the fireplace furthest from the door: we are not surprised to hear that the last man who wore a smock-frock, or the last woman who wore a red or grey "duffel" cloak, was buried last week: we are not surprised at finding the grandson of the old clerk—who (the old clerk) used to stand in the middle of the aisle in a clean smock-frock and toll the single bell—quite a modern swell, with his hair carefully parted down the middle, and attired "quite the masher" in swell clothes, and occupying the position of clerk to the School Board, surveyor to Highway Board, and holding every office in the place. BUT —a big "BUT" here—we are *damnably* disgusted, and the word in italics is used advisedly, to find that every path, every old haunt, is shut up, and that the bridle-path which existed through the park and the woods has been closed, and a new path made, by order of the magistrates, outside the demesne.

Oh! ye great landowners of England, if the above lines should meet your eye, don't

pass them lightly o'er, for you are on the eve of losing the sympathy of a very important class, of whose very existence you have, perhaps, thought very little; and we are precisely the class who, if you had set your faces against any infringements of the public rights of your poor neighbours harmlessly enjoying your property, and had set up the cry in favour of your large estates when well managed being really as beneficial to the poor as yourselves, would have canvassed for you, and in the event of public excitement and uprising, such as we have seen in our youth, would have fought *for* you. As things are, even should we be on the spot, we should stand quietly by and see you and your keepers, and your select party who join in your *battues*, fight it out. Except—and always excepted—in the event of such a scene occurring, and one of the mob orators, whom we hate as much as we are sorry for you, mistaking one of our class for a "base and brutal aristocrat," and offering a little personal violence, probably—as Fielding says

in "Tom Jones"—"a fresh pair of fists would appear on the scene;" as next to the joys of Elysium the mind cannot realise a more enchanting pleasure than a round or two with a mob orator, even if he was as big as the late Ben Caunt or the immortal Heenan. You must remember now that all rights of property are being threatened by the Communists under the name of "advanced Liberals," and that you are living in the glass houses, and that even now there is an eleventh hour remaining to you.

Just contrast your case with that of great landowners who act in the good old fashion. Any one who treads the Pickwickian haunts, and visits the "Leather Bottel" or the "Darnley Arms" at Cobham, can wander quietly through the grand old park of Cobham Hall and the woods to Rochester without seeing so much as a notice-board warning foot-passengers "not to walk on the grass." These privileges are what great estates were meant for, and which do honour to their owners.

As a last word, without saying anything in favour of pigeon-shooting, except that the attack on it was straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, and that the more sensible plan would have been to license the grounds the same as public billiard-tables and put them under police law—the best argument in favour of the shooting *was* that if trap-shooting was abolished, thousands of men in these days would not have anything to shoot at in England.

Yes, *bonâ-fide* shooting, conducted in a sportsman-like manner, is a grand sport, and the present mode compared with that of the past is as much like English sport as a fish stew resembles a fine running trout or salmon stream.

CHAPTER X.

FISHING.

"I WILL show you," writes Izaak Walton of blessed memory, "an artificial minnow that will catch a trout as well as an artificial fly, and it was made by a handsome woman who had a fine hand."

Well, possibly fishing is one of the few pleasures of life which is made absolutely perfect by *entire* solitude. An ardent sportsman, standing by the side of a purling stream with a deep pool handy, and without any living creature near who can by any possibility walk near the bank and scare the fish, and favoured by a warm south wind and a cloudy sky, with alternate little bursts of sunshine and flying showers, ought to be soundly kicked or be seized with bad toothache if he is not happy.

Possibly there are circumstances which might, in the case of a younger man than the writer, make him not displeased with a little society; and that society would be the company of his *fiancée*, especially if "she was a handsome woman who had a fine hand," who knew the art of tying flies; and if she pricked her finger with the hook, he would remember the old nurse's remedy for making it well again. But it is a misery which baffles all description when the village bore happens to catch sight of you fishing, and goes out of his way to come and have a chat; crosses a bridge by which he throws his shadow on the stream, walks up the bank within sight of the fish, does all the mischief he can, and then brings you the startling news that poor Mr. Jones has a face-ache. There may be rogues in the next world, but there can be no fools or bores, or it would be no improvement on this world.

If any one wants an unanswerable argument in favour of the truth of there being "nothing new under the sun," it would be

found in the fact that the first principles taught by Izaak Walton, who lived from the days of Charles I. till the early days of William III., are those which regulate the art of searching for and finding fish of all kinds in all seasons, though the tackle is different now. Harping on my one string as regards my song that there is "nothing new," &c., and for the purpose of comparing age with age, and turning to a totally different subject, the fact is that, with the substitution of a breast-band for a collar, the omnibus horses' harness of to-day is precisely the same according to modern fashion as that of the harness of the horses which drew the old Greek and Roman chariots.

Going back on fish; fly-fishing, of course, is the grandest feature in the sport, as the sportsman can easily carry his impedimenta, which consist simply of a rod, a fly-book, a basket and light landing-net; and happy he is if he finds the weight of his creel somewhat heavy to his shoulders in his homeward walk.

As to the joys of the gentle art, and the beautiful scenery into which fishing draws the follower of the craft onward, old Izaak's books overflow with thankfulness and holy calm, and the joys can be much better found in his book than in any books penned by the hand of man before or since.

Like everything else in England since the days of rapid locomotion, fishing is now hard to get. The London clubs, which contain many of the finest fishermen in the world, go far afield for their sports, and the truth must be told that in these days it wants a golden key to open the gates of the fisherman's paradise.

The rivers in Scotland are greedily sought after, and, according to reports, Norway now is almost as much used up *quà* space for anglers, and privileges to fish, as the rivers within a hundred miles of London.

Owners of trout streams are very kind in granting leave, but only occasionally, as they justly say that they have their own friends, and cannot find room for their friends' friends.

Let us consider the art of fly-fishing proper (the author not pretending for a moment to teach the mode of exercising it—for that readers must consult "Ephemera," and the numerous authors whose writings have appeared in *The Field, Land and Water, Bell's Life,* and other periodicals). In the first place, put before all other qualifications necessary for a real sportsman, absolute "fair play." The blue ribbon of fishing is when you see a shy fish, half inclined to feed and half not, lying near the top of the water—a kind of "he would and he wouldn't" gentleman—which looks askance at your fly, moves a little towards it, perhaps even puts his mouth to it, and then retires with dignity looking in an opposite direction, like an Irishman standing with his hands in his pocket, leaning against a post on a Sunday afternoon in a country town in Ireland, apparently thinking of and caring for nought, though in his heart of hearts longing to know who you are, and what business you have there. Just so with master fish—he is suspicious, doubtful,

and half inclined to see what the strange fly is.

This is the time to say to yourself, "It is a waiting match, my boy, is it? You are mine before I leave this spot." Then, as Izaak Walton says, "you shall retire for a while and smoke a pipe of tobacco," and change your fly.

Put on a single fly, a nondescript, "a Strange's fancy" for choice, for though it looks like a bit of cobweb or thistledown, it does for any water, and floats well as a dry fly. If there is a bridge handy, and you can go on the fish's side of the river, and you can keep right out of sight in crossing, and get about a dozen or fifteen yards below the fish, what a triumph it is if after creeping on your hands and knees, and drying your fly well, you can manage to let your fly fall a yard or two above him and two or three yards wide of him, and to have the luck to see a mighty swirl in the water, and a rush like a mad dog. Then comes the tug of war.

If there should be some piles or a large

bunch of weeds handy, and you have to fight against these obstacles, and you land your fish, the victory is doubly enjoyable, and you have a right to feel that you have secured your prize fairly and legitimately, and don't be surprised if you find large drops of perspiration like beads standing on your forehead, and that you are shaking from head to foot as if you had the ague. That is all part of the fun of the fair.

When the fish are on the feed all over the stream, and are mad with glory, any one in a rapid river with a cast of their flies can catch trout, or at anyrate hook them, for there is a deal of luck about it; but the cream of the art is outwitting a fish in the daytime when he has to be coaxed on to the fly.

All fish which will take an artificial bait or dead bait are, to the real sportsman, much more prized when "grassed" if so caught. The Thames fishermen who catch the big trout by *bonâ-fide* spinning are masters of the art, for the fish are so scarce, and the patience and hard work so trying, that success de-

pends wholly on unlimited perseverance in all weathers. Very likely it may be, as stated, that many of the Thames trout are caught with a golden hook, or in other words, they have been watched as regards their favourite localities, feeding places, &c., and the information is duly wired to London to some man who has well-lined pockets, who does not mind giving a sovereign or more to catch them. No matter, the man who does catch them must be a real good one anyhow.

No doubt also it is true that if there was a court of inquiry into the taking of Thames trout it might be found that many which were supposed to have been caught by fair spinning were taken with a live minnow.

The fishing "burglars" are men who get a day's fly-fishing on condition of using the artificial fly only, and who take with them some of the *bastard* flies so called, such as the "Alexandra," and other similar kind. These so-called flies are nothing more than an exact representation when under water of a minnow. The body is made of tinsel

metal, in fact, with some peacock's feathers "rigged on," for it is not a dressed fly within the meaning of the Act, and nothing is required but to pay out the line—it does not even want casting; and let the "*thing*"—for it is not a "fly"—go down a rapid and sink in mid-water in a pool, and with a movement of the hand to check it, it is for all the world like a minnow rushing away, and you will see a trout rush at it like a pike at a gudgeon or small eel, and all your part of the performance is playing and landing the fish. Some Alexandras were exhibited in London in April, which were finished off with phantom triple hooks.

There is another mode of what real fishermen would call poaching, but which some who call themselves *real* fly fishermen will argue out as fair, which is, fishing with a large sunk alder fly, with a single shot just above the hook. The fish thinks it is a drowsy caterpillar and almost grabs it. Then there is the dodge towards dusk in deep-running water to put a strip of white kid about half

as long as your little finger and not quite so broad on the hook, and probably it looks to the fish like a drowning white moth, and he acts accordingly.

Barring the "Alexandra," either of the last-named are legitimate dodges if you have an empty creel, and the fish have not been on the feed, and you want a brace of fish, provided that you honestly confess to it; but a man who professes to have got all his sport by *bonâ-fide* fly-fishing, and shows his sport under that guise, is in the same category as those who land at Dover, and say they have nothing to declare, when their pockets are full of lace and other contraband articles. Query, is this a *lie* or *not?* We say, "Yes, it is."

The next art to fly-fishing is roach-fishing with a single-hair line in rivers, such as Christchurch river for instance, or Ringwood, where they run very large, and are found in very deep water. They will take the fly as well in July and August especially. The striking the fish, which feeds very gently, so much so

that it is hardly possible to see the float move, requires great quickness and skill, as the slightest jerk allows the fish, as Izaak says, to "share the line with you," and the playing them requires almost as much nerve and hand as playing a trout.

Venturing to "enter in where angels fear to tread," though not professing to be a senior wrangler or first-class man in this art, I will venture to say what I have found to be the best bait, frequently tried with success in a river which flowed through a beautiful park in a southern country, which used to be a glorious river for coarse fish, and quite undisturbed in days gone by; in fact, no one was allowed near the best part of the river except by special permission. The bait was the finest white flour made into a stiff paste and rolled out like an enormous pancake, and then spread over with honey. A coating of flour was sprinkled over the honey, and then it was kneaded, and rolled into balls about the size of a small bagatelle-ball. Possibly there was a charm in this paste, as a lady—

and a handsome lady who had a fine hand—prepared this fish pudding. Accompanied by that lady, after evening church on *Sunday*, we—that is, the handsome, &c., lady, and the writer—went together to a large deep pool, *into* which ran a rapid stream, and threw in about twenty or thirty of these bagatelle-balls. [Query (?) a question to be decided by Exeter Hall—must not these balls have been taken by one or other of the congregation on their way to church ?]

Then the writer, who had a plummet in his pocket and a piece of long string [*vide* query above—this looks as if the plummet and the string were in his pocket during divine service], accompanied by the handsome lady, &c., got a long stick, which was on the premises and *not* brought there with malice aforethought, plumbed the depth, having previously put a long peg in the bank at the water-line, so as to mark for certain how much the surface of the water had changed by increase or decrease during the night, so as not to have to plumb

the depth next morning and disturb the water.

Then the next morning the writer was "all there" and baited with a little of the paste mixed with very fine white wool, provided by the handsome lady with, &c., and in a very short time got hold of the first of the biggest lot of roach he ever caught; and on opening the mouth of No. 1 the pudding pulled out of his mouth like a fiddle-string—he was "full of pudding," like Parson Adams was, when merry at the wedding-feast (for particulars of which *vide* Fielding, his "Joseph Andrews"), through over-eating himself—the one more help was *fatal.*

As regards live-bait fishing people must do as they please. Wholesale baiting with chopped-up worms for barbel, watching a float with a large gudgeon or dace doing "a dance of death" a few feet below it, on the chance of a passing pike swallowing it, and masticating it, until firmly fixed in his intestines after a few minutes, at the expiration of which the man on the bank in charge of

the rod can tow him in like a log of wood, may be sport. The great question, however, arises, whether it is *good* sport? for this reason, that the pike or luce or jack which may have seized the impaled victim *may* be a twenty-pound fish or a *one*-pound fish. Anyhow, he is wounded beyond recovery, and cannot be pitched in again if a "squeaker" taken on a gorge hook. Now, spinning for pike with an artificial or dead bait has this advantage—that you can tell in a minute whether he is a fine fish or a "squeaker," and if a "squeaker" he may be "shaken off;" but if he is allowed to go home and gorge a live bait he *must* die, for if a British soldier is sure to die almost with a simple bullet in his intestines, how can a fish live with a double hook in his—especially as the double hook has probably torn the soft places in his intestines. Therefore as regards pike-fishing, which is by no means an art to be despised—as conceited men say it is—can only be carried on in a sportsmanlike way by spinning. Pike are very tough and long-

lived, and a small fish which has been hooked only can be returned into the water if caught by spinning, and in the Pikeland newspaper may be returned as "seriously wounded," and may wear a medal, and "may live to fight another day," and die as twelve, fifteen, or even a twenty-pounder, and may have his death honourably recorded in the sporting papers, may have a *post mortem* held on him at the Piscatorial Society amidst much tobacco, ovations, congratulations, and the sparkling bowl; and may even live after death in a glass case in the society's rooms, and be exhibited before royalty at a Fisheries Exhibition.

There never were such days as the present for fishing-tackle. The specimens of rods and fishing paraphernalia, artificial baits, &c., exhibited at different shows, and to be seen at the various markets, were a perfect wonder of science and skill. The makers now have contrived to turn out feather-weight rods which for spring and stiffness combined are marvellous work of art.

Now, is not *all* this common sense? and is not the moral this, "Never destroy wantonly what you cannot replace"? If you want an argument in favour of this maxim, see what mischief is done in other so-called sports by simply looking into the poulterers' and fish shops, especially into the former, at the beginning of September and October, when you will find, as regards the first month, partridges the size of missel-thrushes, and as regards the second month, pheasants about the size of puny old-fashioned partridges; and you will also see in January or early in February a few small fish which look like gutted herrings (the outsides whereof much resemble the face of a putty-faced man sickening for smallpox), with a faint attempt at spots here and there, and these fish are called by courtesy "trout," and these things will be bought by some "cad" who likes to give a shilling apiece for his peas; and when these things called "trout" by courtesy come to table, a pre-rehearsed scene is enacted between Mr. Cad and his wife.

Wife. "What! trout already, 'Enery? What did you give a pound?"

Mr. C. (*looking round at his guests for approval*). "Never mind, Hemma. (*To guests.*) I always say to my fishmonger, 'Mind, the first trout as comes to London is mine.'"

This is *not* imagination; it is truth.

Let us have a picture of the reverse of wasteful vulgarity, in the shape of good-natured opulence.

"It fell upon a day in the merry month of May"—

Yes, it really *did* occur in that month that a party of young men, at or near the thirties mostly, were dining at Blackwall. We (self one, of course) were all fighting the world. The party consisted of about six or seven of us who had all got a foothold, and were just about paying our way, including a month's long vacation expenses. The fish-dinner was a very exceptional treat, and the occasion of it was a special one; and we had a private room on the first floor. In the ground room

below us a state public dinner of some kind was going on, and we heard a distant and constant bombardment consisting of emotional speeches and table-rapping.

A genial old boy, with an enormous white waistcoat which covered an immense amount of corporation, came on the balcony below us and lit a cigar, looking very bored.

"Come up here, old boy—Room 17—you will have better fun with us," said Chaffer.

The white waistcoat disappeared from the balcony, and in a minute or two the door opened, and the genial "grand old man" walked in.

Chaffer, whose presence of mind was always a marvel, instantly grasped his hand, and introduced him to us as his "long-lost uncle," and invented a pedigree and gave us the history of his uncle's life; how he came to London with a halfpenny in his pocket which he stole out of the tray of a blind man's dog; became a prosperous merchant trading with the far-off heathen, and co-operating with the missionaries in the sale of bad spirits, and of

guns that would not go off, and knives that would not open; after amassing an enormous fortune had come to Blackwall with the intention of giving the present company five-and-twenty pounds apiece if, to show their confidence, they would deposit their purses and watches with him and leave him alone with the spoons; finishing up with a touching allusion to his deceased aunt, formerly the wife of his long-lost uncle, and proposing her memory in connection with the health of "my dear Uncle White Waistcoat."

The good old man enjoyed the fun immensely. We were neither *ebrii* nor *ebrioli*; and the old 'un wanted to order up what Leaver would have called "another cooper of claret," but we would not let him.

When time was on the wane, and the bill came in, old White Waistcoat, speaking below his breath almost and very earnestly, said, "Will you be offended if I ask a favour? Then oblige me by allowing me to pay your bill. I am a single man, with more money than I can spend, and I should

like to do it for goodwill." The dissent was unanimous.

Now a Blackwall bill, with a dinner in a private room left to the landlord's own ordering, including a good dessert for seven people, came to nearer twenty than fifteen pounds.

It need hardly be said that we refused his kind offer, and that, although we never knew who he was, our parting greeting with the dear old boy was real and genuine.

The cry as regards sea-fishing is that we are wearing out all our fishing-grounds. Let us take care that we do not exhaust our fresh-water fisheries.

The dear old fogeys who put on their fishing-aprons to save their clothes, and who sit in a punt in company with much lunch and wonderfully good liquor and cigars, are the salt of the earth. Many of them are millionaires, whose wills appear in the "Illustrated" after death, as sworn under sums of money which make one think hard.

There is a moral to be learned from some

of them. The world has gone easy with them, and money has rolled in upon them, but the natural man comes out, and the love of rest, quiet, and nature; and a "bread-and-cheese appetite" in a punt is dearer to them than all the luxuries and delicacies with which doubtless their wives and families are surrounding themselves. Such is life! How truly does Thackeray hit this off in "Vanity Fair," where the Marquis of Steine, whose state and grandeur are almost royal, tells Becky Sharpe, "Gad, I dined with the King yesterday, and we had a neck of mutton and turnips. A dinner of herbs is better than a stalled ox very often."

There is one game fish which almost necessitates live bait, and that is the perch. There is no other certain way of taking the big perch—except in occasional places, such as below a weir in deep rushing water, when the Archimedean minnow or a small spoon will do—but by live bait; and, as a rule, to take big perch a gudgeon is the gentleman to which he will pay special attention, and

the bigger he is the better chance of a good perch.

The paternoster proper, with three out-rigged hooks eighteen inches apart, baited with a lob-worm, a minnow, and a gudgeon respectively, is simple poaching; but a paternoster rig, consisting of fine-drawn gut with one hook whipped on eighteen inches above the bullet, with a big gudgeon on the hook, thrown out a long distance in heavy water and trolled gradually inshore or towards the boat or punt, is the most telling thing to get hold of a big perch. Only remember this, that your rod should be very light and your tackle *very* fine if you want real sport. Let it be even betting on you and the fish, and let the "grassing" of the fish be due to your skill and not the strength of the tackle; for remember the taking of fish is a *sport*, not a business.

Nothing has done more harm to fishing than the prizes for the greatest weights. Happily the custom is being much discontinued. All prizes should be for the

best specimen fish caught with the finest tackle, as every fisherman must know that there are times and seasons when the coarse fish go on the feed like cannibals, or hungry schoolboys when they hear the dinner-bell.

In Devonshire worm-fishing for trout is allowed, wading and throwing up stream. It seems contrary to the rules of the art, and would be looked on with horror in Hampshire, where there is as much fishing and as many good and true sportsmen as in any part of England. However, this is a question for Devonshire people, and they must do as they please.

I believe that I have a constitutional horror and hatred of worms, and should prefer a world without any, barring a thundering big lob-worm or two, when there are big perch in a still deep hole, which will not take a gudgeon or minnow.

Ireland *was* the most charming place in the world for mountain trout, because you could go wherever you liked almost, but I hear it is not so now, thanks to the worst

gang of villains who ever wore broadcloth, who call themselves nationalists and patriots, but who are aiders and abettors of murder and shedding of innocent blood, and stir up the worst passions of the people who now scowl at strangers.

Trailing with a spoon may not be very sportsmanlike, but is the regular way of fishing in the Irish lakes in Connemara, especially in Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. It is very lazy work, but very good sport if you do get hold of a big pike a long way from home, as it will fight, and no mistake; and if the truth must be told, the tackle which is used is very strong.

The greatest enemies to fish and fishing in ordinary rivers are keepers; in fact, keepers of all kinds very often are only a selfish, expensive, tyrannical nuisance. They are always against nature, sacrificing every bird and animal in the wood for their—I almost said cursed—pheasants, taking fads into their heads about preserving trout or salmon in wrong places, destroying fish that are

in the river, always cutting the weeds, and playing some devilry or another.

The river where I caught many fine fish, which runs through the park, a long time ago, was *never* disturbed, as there was a fine breed of waterfowl there; and the river curved round under overhanging trees, and well screened by high thick hedges on the side facing the north. There never was a better place or more enjoyable for pike, perch, and roach, some of which latter ran to two pounds.

It is sad to say, but the last time I saw it the fish were gone, barring the river itself, which had been dragged *six* times in *one* year, when the family were away.

It is no use talking, some lubbers are always destroying things of priceless value. A year or two since I went to some water, it matters not where, which had a great repute for pike and perch, and it belonged to the mayor and corporation. I never saw better water, or more hopeful.

Of course there was an inn handy, where

all the "gentlemen anglers," as the landlord said, came, and where, as I was not surprised to hear, great deeds were recorded of local fishermen.

"Fish!" said the landlord, "there just be a sight of fish here, to be sure. We had the corporation barge up here a week ago wi' a heap of "*wittles*," and they 'ad their tent in my garden, and a lot of ladies came wi' 'em, and they eat and drank and danced, and one of the councillors slipped off the bank in deep water, and if old Jem and his men had not been there wi' the nets"——

"The *what*, sir?"

"The nets, to be zure. Why, they dragged the big holes that day, and got a sight of fish —pike, perch, and a trout or two."

The late Lord Beaconsfield, in his Life of Lord George Bentinck, writes that when that noble sportsman heard that Surplice, with which he parted, had won the Derby, he gave a "superb groan." If his lordship had been alive, and would have repeated his "superb" groan, I would at the word "nets" have

groaned against him for a new hat or a boiled leg of mutton and trimmings, which used to be the popular stakes for a single wicket-match.

No one knows when a word in season may reach some one's ear, and *again*, you noblemen and gentlemen of England, who have rivers through your estates, which are dragged and are allowed to go to ruin, and are poached and destroyed, do interest yourselves and your tenants in preserving them and letting the fishing, and issue just so many tickets as the water can easily stand. Lots of little inns in remote country districts are doing well by getting themselves known and advertised to the cycling world; why not for fishing?

I pleaded this cause hard in "Baily's Magazine" some years ago, as well as the cause of allowing people to enjoy the amenities of your estates, as regards the wild portions of it, and I plead it more earnestly now. Fishermen "be all honest men" as a rule, as old Izaak says, and liberal and free-handed; and I said before, as I say again, these strangers within your gates would be ready and

willing when the parson wants a little help for his poor or his schools.

Speaking again for my own class, the ex-countrymen, whose bodies are in London though our souls are in the delights of the country, only try us and give us the chance. We are starved out almost for want of water to fish in, and the more out-of-the-way and retired the village, the happier we should be, especially if the keeper was hung up in his own nets, "hammock fashion," between the high trees, and fed with bread of affliction and water of affliction until he made a public apology for his sins past. Again reverting to my dear old friend, reading whose writings is almost as good as a day in the country, hear what dear old Izaak says:—

"What would a blind man give to see the pleasant rivers, and meadows, and flowers, and fountains that we have met with since we met together? I have been told that if a man that was born blind could obtain to have his sight if for only one hour during his whole life, and should on the first opening of his

eyes, fix his sight upon the sun when it was it its full glory, either at the rising or setting of it, he would be be so transported and amazed, and so admire the glory of it, that he would not willingly move his eyes from that ravishing object to behold all the other ravishing beauties that this world could present to him. And this and many other blessings we enjoy daily. And for most of them, because they are so common, most men forget to pay their praises; but let not us, because it is a sacrifice so pleasing to Him that made the sun, and still protects us and gives us flowers, and showers, and stomachs, and meat, and content, and liberty to go a-fishing."

CHAPTER XI.

LAWN TENNIS, TENNIS RACQUETS, AND GOLF.

THE last toast at public dinners is generally "The Ladies," probably because it is the best and worthiest. On that principle, at any rate, lawn tennis is put last here, as it is the only sport almost, except fishing and hunting, in which ladies can take part.

As a pure garden game it is perfection; as an adjunct to a cricket-ground, it is a terrible eyesore to a cricketer, for, say what the captain will, it always happens that some of the eleven get away to the lawn tennis ground, and are often called away from a set to go in. This is not cricket, as no man is worth his salt, no matter how good he may be, unless his whole attention is on the match from start to finish. The game can only be played in perfection when a few friends meet

quietly really to *play* and enjoy themselves; and it is more enjoyable when there is a conspicuous absence of chicken salad, champagne cup, garden-party dresses, and the fashionable paraphernalia. Good temper, cheerful company, and plain food are the requisites for simple enjoyment.

But oh, horror! it makes one's blood curdle to think of it; but such things happen as the unexpected arrival of Captain Muff, with his glass in his eye, and a racquet like a snow-shoe, who has heard we were going to play, and came for a little practice, as *he* is going to play in a "tournament" at Puddleton Minima, and wants to "wipe the doctor's eye."

In the first place Captain Muff is a bore; secondly, he makes a seventh in the party, disturbing the pre-arranged plan of four playing and two resting; thirdly, he is noted for being a very second-rate selfish player; and lastly, he is not so far off as he might be from being a snob. He is like the serpent in the garden of Eden.

The entrance of Captain Muff raises the question of tournaments. England is a free country, and people must do as they please, and nobody need go unless they please to a tournament, and doubtless many people take a great interest in them; and tournaments have become gate-money affairs like cricket. The nuisance of tournaments is that second-rate players in them disturb the enjoyment of those who want to keep a game simple and amusing; and, if the truth was told, there are immense numbers of ladies and gentlemen who never play in public who would beat a great many who do.

There are a great many Captain Muffs about now, who are always intruding and doing a cheap swagger. The first words that come out of their mouth generally are that they are going to Puddleton Minima, or some such place, to compete for the prize open to all comers; their talk is about Renshaw smashes, and if they are good enough to try that world-known stroke, not unfrequently sending the ball over the garden wall!

Not many summers ago, at a garden party, a Captain Muff turned up, and brought a sister who had won the Ladies' Silver Racquet at some local meeting. There were at that party two tennis-players—a young fellow from Oxford, and a young lady of about eighteen—and both of them played as good and safe an amateur game as any one could wish to see; and a trap was laid for Captain Muff and his sister, and, amid much mock entreaty, they were asked to play together, as we had never seen any "tournament players."

Making excuse, like the lady who has a slight cold before singing when she means to lead off with a high note which almost cracks the pier-glass, and makes the parrot swear and fall down off his perch, Miss Muff "had not brought her 'match shoes;'" half a dozen pairs of ladies' shoes were offered her to choose from.

"Helen," said the gentleman of the house to the young lady, "if you and George will beat them hollow, I will give you a new racquet, and take you to Ascot, and George too"

(now Helen and George were sweet on each other). "Now be cool; keep your places, and wear them out, and you must win."

The game went on: the champion and championess were *not* in it; we heard the words "tiresome" from the lady when she missed a ball or played it out, and a muttered monosyllable from the captain, who felt that the spectators looked on him with as much animation as a circle of dead cod-fish, and at last they both fairly lost their tempers and the set, and were beaten to a standstill. Of course they "had to go home early;" and when their carriage was clear out of the grounds, and they were out of eye-shot and ear-shot, the hand-shaking and congratulations and ovations were tremendous. Never was a merrier party than there was that evening; we were all in riotous spirits.

The only remark about lawn tennis applies to many other games, and the writer must not be accused of finding fault or querulousness in making this remark.

From time immemorial perhaps, certainly

for a hundred and ten years, the size of the bat, the cricket-ball, creases, distances, &c., have been defined: the number of cards to either player has been defined at every game, and therefore it seems reasonable that the size of racquets and of the strings should be defined also, as we see one player with a small barn-door playing against another with an ordinary racquet. So in cricket it is a puzzle that the size of pads has never been defined. When the sad game of croquet existed, some players played with an ebony contrivance like a turf-beater, and another played with an ordinary mallet.

There is the great-grandfather of lawn tennis, the royal game of Tennis, to which we must take off our hats, and say, "Come aboard, sir," as the sailors say on their touching the quarterdeck.

The tradition about tennis is that it takes two years to learn, and a little more to play well; but it is a glorious game, and there is no greater privilege than going into the tennis court at Lords or Prince's and seeing it

played. Charles II. was a good tennis player, as recorded by Pepys, who saw him perform, Dec. 28, 1683-4. "I drove to the tennis court, and saw the King and Sir Arthur Slingsby play my Lord of Suffolke and my Lord Chesterfield. The King beat three and lost two sets, they all, and he particularly, I thought, playing well." There is no laughing or chattering, as the interest rivets every one's attention. As regards its younger brother, racquets, Mr. Prince ought to be made a Peer for instituting the club at Prince's, which has been the scene of many a good story and many a good joke in the winter, when the light failed and the Amateur Stonemasons, as the wearers of the heavy blanket coats were called, assembled for a friendly chat and to smoke the calumet of peace after their game before going home to dress for dinner; and the "just half an hour to stay" was often prolonged for two or three hours in the anteroom.

There are two circumstances about Prince's which, I trust, without being egotistical, I wil.

record. It may have been in print before, but I really don't know.

The hand that holds this pen held the racquet with which the first ball was struck in what is now the match court, then the only one finished, and it occurred thus:—The lease of the premises had to be signed before opening the court, probably it was on a Saturday. Mr. George Prince was at home at a small house at the side; the grounds were partly market garden, with a good deal of shrubbery and real live blackbirds and thrushes.

On announcing myself and tendering my credentials, Mr. Prince said that he was waiting in the expectation of the arrival of the lease, and for the first time I knew what the premises were for. With that ready courtesy which always marked the character of the genial proprietor, he offered to show me the court, and asked if I would like to have a game.

Now the game of close court was new to me, as at school we played the old game of bat fives, in the open, against a wall at the end

of a large court, with the Winchester fives' bat, which was a long spring bat with a head about the size of a lady's hand, so of course I was not at home at the new game, but the fascination of it was very great, and I found myself very hot and tired after an hour, and have a lively recollection of a silver tankard of bitter which was put out of sight with admirable despatch, though it was a "silver tankard" quart—not quite imperial measure.

Now I was specially sent on this mission, as the lessees were strangers to the solicitor, who acted for the owners, and it was of so much importance that sending a common clerk would not do.

Mr. Prince and I chatted over the lease, the noble game of racquets, the list of subscribers, which included almost all the *then* Marylebone Club.

Monday morning came, and the solicitor, who was anxious about his client's interest, on talking to me about other matters, said, "Well, how did you get on with Mr. Prince —any difficulty?"

"Oh, no; he is a very respectable tenant, and has all the Marylebone Club at his back, and the place is to be a grand racquet court, and I had a game of racquets for the first time in a close court."

"And what did he say when he signed the lease?"

Will the reader be kind enough in imagination to get ready to catch me in his arms—and, *mind*, I fall heavy.

"Oh, heavens! I *forgot to ask him to sign it!*"

Of course there was no trouble about it, and the upshot was another visit to Mr. Prince, a hearty laugh, another game of racquets, and probably another tankard of bitter beer.

The last game to be named is the royal game of golf, which, though originally a Scotch game, with a suspicion of being somewhat descended from a fourth game of ball known to the Romans, the "Paganica," which was a game of ball played in the open country.

It is a game which, originally of slow growth, has grown surely and steadily. Blackheath has been the stronghold of the Scotch division in London for any number of years; in fact, for the great-grandfathers of the present generation. Wimbledon is another metropolitan centre. At Westward Ho, in Devon, at Felixstowe, near Harwich, and a few other places, the game has taken a strong hold.

The advantage of it is that it may be continued quite into old age, as some of the "canny" old Scotchmen who play are well over the seventies.

Like all other grand sports, it is very simple as regards rules, and is easily learnt *quà* theory, but it is a work of many years to become a first-rank man. To those who have never seen it, it may be described as hitting a very hard heavy small ball somewhat larger than an ordinary racquet-ball, made of gutta-percha, formerly of leather stuffed with feathers, into holes about the size of a drinking-tumbler cut in the ground,

immediately round which the turf is levelled, or rather smoothed.

These holes are at long distances apart, and the difficulties of the game arise from the ball pitching into rough places—a gravel pit for instance, or amongst thick furze, and it has to be knocked out by one of various sized and shaped clubs, some of wood, some of iron, for which there are technical names, and the man who makes a hole in fewest strokes wins.

The exercise is about the same as partridge-shooting plus the arm work, and the interest and excitement are very great to players and lookers on. Each player has a "caddy," a boy to carry a bundle of clubs for him.

The greatest sin which a looker-on can commit is to speak or move on the stroke, and if any one wants to witness the play, and will implicitly obey orders, and keep silence, probably there would be no objection to his doing so.

It so happened that a great friend of mine, whose name will be well remembered by

veteran golfers, the late Mr. Stuart Flemying of Moness, was a celebrated player, and many a time has he taken me down to see the game at Blackheath in days past.

There is great clanship and *esprit de corps* amongst members of the club, and at their dinners, to the grand hospitality of which I take off my hat, trophies of the past are paraded with much reverence. Amongst other things there are silver golf clubs with silver balls attached by a little chain, with the name and arms of each captain as he is instituted to that honour, and they date back to the last century.

The game is to the golfers quite as dear as cricket is to Englishmen, and though of course there is a strong Scotch element in it, many English, especially old cricketers, have acquired much skill. One great advantage is that it can be played all the year round.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTICUIT TANDEM FACTOQUE HIC FINE QUIEVIT.

THESE words ought properly to come at the end; anyhow they must be welcome to the wearied traveller through the labyrinths of this book, as he must know he is nearly through.

When I was a boy at school there used to be a certain divine—it matters not who he was—who was good for an hour, or rather *bad* for that period, if he preached in Winchester Cathedral,—if let alone.

There were two hundred boys who occupied the steps going up to the altar, on which forms were placed, and directly the Ven. Mr. Boanerges appeared a kind of suppressed groan came from the school; and by a kind of tacit conspiracy if a pause came

in the sermon after twenty minutes, and such words as "And now" fell from the preacher's lips, all the school stood up and turned round as if the sermon was over; and if the preacher went on, they resumed their former position with a kind of apologetic and sulky surprise.

That ruse killed any sermon, for the preacher was like a winged partridge afterwards. I feel like that parson now, and if I don't lie down the readers will groan.

Cui bono? All this talk about sports?

That is not for me to answer. Yes, I will answer it as regards more than one English citizen—names unknown—who want educating. So now I address myself to people of that class out of the five millions of people in London and other *gents* of unknown numbers, ashore and afloat, elsewhere, or such places as—

> "On Iceland's snowy mountains,
> On India's coral strand."

Gents, the thing against which we most

loudly protest is a trick which you have of insisting that you know of things which oc-

Page 188, line 4 from bottom of page, *for*

"On Iceland's snowy mountains,
On India's coral strand,"

read

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand."

never had a pair of pads on till I was twenty-nine years of age.

"Of course *they wore pads first when round-arm bowling first came in.*"

"Sir," I said to him, "how can you stand up and talk such nonsense?" Possibly there was an adjective before nonsense, for the provocation was tremendous (a big big D perhaps). "Round-arm bowling came in between 1828 and 1835, fifty years ago. Alfred Mynn's and Sam Redgate's round-arm bowling, and Sir Frederick Bathurst, a low round-arm delivery, have never been surpassed in any age for terrific pace, six years before a pad was dreamt of." Now, if this single fact is driven into the heads of a few Young Englands, who *will* "make history" suit their ideas, some good has been done.

Now I must button-hole another of this class, who was proposing to bowl me out so many times in two hundred balls for five pounds or ten pounds, with the proviso that I must play "single-wicket laws."

Now I took exceptions to the five or ten pounds on making a match of any kind, but if it amused him to bowl me two hundred balls I was quite ready to try and stop them, but happening to be a gentleman and a

stranger to the speaker I declined to make any match, as I was *not* a professional. I informed him that my hand had never directly or indirectly touched money except to part with it *quâ* cricket, and I would not play him for so much as a cigarette.

Then we came to discuss the terms of what he meant by "single-wicket laws."

"Why, of *course* you must not go out of your ground to stop the ball; you must stay at home and play it."

Possibly this "everyday preacher"—for you may take your oath he was an authority somewhere—*had* heard of the law that a run cannot be scored if the striker is off his ground when he hits the ball at single wicket.

"Sir," I replied, as I did to my "round arm and pad orator," "how can you talk such" (*subaudi* big big D again) "nonsense in a public room. When Mynn and Felix played at Lords in 1846 for the championship of England, which match I saw, Felix had to go out of his ground seventy-two

times out of nearly two hundred and fifty balls to save his wicket. You swagger here about a game of which you do *not* know the simplest rules!"

Now, if I have put down these two gents, I have done something, because their dearest friends will say to them, "He had you there, Bill."

Well, this chaff leads up to realities; and seriously, I have tried my very hardest in this book not to put down a single word which I do not believe myself and is not the outcome of my own experience, and some of that experience has been long; as in July next, if alive, I shall have completed my fiftieth year on the cricket-ground, dating from the time when I was a little fag at Winchester and was made to go long-stop and watch out for two whole seasons. Therefore I think I have a right to make this remark *qua* cricket, and it is this, viz., that except when made a source of livelihood, directly it ceases to be anything except "a game" pure and simple, it is absolute poison to the mind,

which is always ready to receive the seeds of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness.

The words, "except when made a source of livelihood," are not put in sneeringly, as I believe that many of the players who live by the game are as fond of a match as a boy just out of school, though many a poor fellow has to bowl and work hard with a sick child at home or other sorrow at heart.

As regards all the other sports and games I have spoken of, the same remark applies pretty much. The very word "sport" implies harmless pleasure; and the only way in which it should be mixed with business is, that a man must put on his "business mind" to make all preparations for it. You may always observe that a good business man who takes a holiday looks into the preparation of everything connected with his amusement himself, and never trusts to any one else.

Every one must know what a "business mind" is by daily experience; as guests at a

business man's house must have observed that A. or B., whatever his name is, if a banker, or lawyer, or merchant, or what not, who made the last good joke overnight and who smoked the "just one more cigar," is somewhat "absent" at breakfast, the fact being that his mind is at his place of business.

Temper is a drawback to sport, but not insuperable, as many a man who is at red-heat in a moment is as loyal to the sport as any one can be. Sulkiness is absolutely terrible and unpardonable, and it is a great misfortune that a sulky man cannot be excluded from sport.

I have seen as much of the world as most men with the same opportunities, and have known intimately the very best sportsmen of all kinds in the world, the very best cricketers, riders—who have broken everything but their necks, and "hope to be spared to break those!"—shots, fishermen, &c. &c., and was brought up by a kind and indulgent Father, who was perhaps as good a sportsman

as ever lived in its Catholic sense, as, independently of his being a very good rider and splendid fisherman, he knew the habits and customs of every living denizen of the fields and woods and rivers which was the subject of sport. I think he was about the very worst shot I ever saw except myself, though perhaps there never was a man who knew where to find game of any kind better than he did. Being the youngest of the family, I was a great deal alone without a companion of my own age (and did not care about being about with girls) until I went to school, and the woods were my home to a great extent, and I was never happier than in them, and every animal and bird in them was my intimate friend and acquaintance, and barring clearing the sparrows' nests out of the gutters, I never took a bird's nest in my life. No wonder then that I boil a little when I see Cockneydom and avarice practically closing the woods to the villagers, and the pride of possession usurping the good old maxim of "goodwill toward men."

Now listen, for this is true, and a letter, which will be mentioned directly, is before me. Three years ago I gave what is conventionally called "a lecture" at the Marlborough Rooms, Regent Street, on the subject of this book; in fact, this book is an enlargement of the notes of that lecture.

Professor Ruskin, who, although not a cricketer himself, is a great advocate for athletics as manly exercise, took the chair, supported by Sir Theodore Martin, who was a good athlete, and a great upholder of athletics, and who, when he was Lord Rector of St. Andrews University, urged the students to follow them: and on the platform were some twenty of the best sportsmen in the world.

In giving this lecture, I drew a picture from life of a country village as I remembered it in boyhood and as it is now. In my early days there were paths through all the woods, and even a bridle-track through the park; there was a good head of game, and though the children went into the woods for wild

flowers in the spring and nutting in the autumn, they never went into the coverts beyond a yard or two off the path. The game was liberally given away, and the poor could have rabbits at twopence each, the payment being to avoid jealousy or favouritism. There was not a poacher in the neighbourhood, for every labourer was practically a keeper. Then came the other side of the picture of the village as it is now. The whole parish is hermetically sealed.

The morning after the lecture I received a letter from an utter stranger, telling me that he was present at the Marlborough Rooms, and personally wished to thank me for what I said about the shutting up country villages, stating that he had gone into the most beautiful part of a country which he had often passed through by train, and had taken his wife and children there; and from the time he went into it till he came away he could not get off the road without being stopped by a keeper.

He never knew what part of the coun-

try I was speaking of, or where I came from.

Now hold your breath when I tell you the fact—it *was the very village* I was speaking of. The gentleman who wrote is a barrister now living in London.

Is it profane to say, "How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?" for if these words mean anything, they must apply to the selfish conduct of those who keep all that is good to themselves. Isolated woods away from the beaten tracks, between village and village, are as much private property as a room in any one's house, but in cases where old beaten footpaths which existed from time immemorial through the fields and the woods have been closed, the so doing is a *cruel* wrong.

Now that parish was sold not many years ago for very nearly a quarter of a million of money, and it may be a bad pun and an *ironical* remark, but no less true, the *iron* entered into its soul.

If every keeper and hanger-on of keepers

were turned out of that place to-morrow, and the woods and rivers were left to Nature, in a few years it would be an earthly paradise again, as it once was.

When a young man, reading for an examination during the late summer and early autumn for seventeen consecutive weeks without exception, I rode or walked through the park and woods of that parish, and of a park in a neighbouring parish, of which I had the key to the private rides, and I could have gone on till now if I had nothing else to do.

I hope the reader will not think that I have been too hard on the abuse of sports, but I cannot help it, or change my mind. If conceited and ill-natured men don't know it, it is quite time they should learn that in every sport, in the hunting-field, cricket-ground, or elsewhere, they are despised and detested. They ought to know it, as they cannot help observing the dead silence when they leave the pavilion to go in and when they come out, and the derisive cheer when

they drop a catch or let a ball through their legs; how in riding through the village no one gives them a cheerful greeting, and how noisy demagogues who preach upon them get a fairly willing audience, and their conduct brings disgrace on a whole parish. The man who does his best is always welcome if he is not A 1, because he tries all he knows.

It may be laid down as a general rule that the best of the best sportsmen of all classes are known for courage and modesty and unselfishness, and talk of "our side," and not about themselves, and are ready to applaud all that is good in their companions, whose success is as dear to them as their own. And in speaking of themselves they resemble the survivors of the six hundred who charged at Balaclava, none of whom ever told one how many Russians they cut down, but simply said, "Yes, sir, we had to ride hard that day." Just so the grand sportsmen are content that their mighty deeds—if any—should be like the

great deeds of the Red Indian warriors—who have passed away to the happy hunting-grounds—which were not recorded in books, but which were ever remembered by the watch-fires on the prairie.

THE END.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

MR. GALE'S LECTURES, &c.

THE following Syllabus contains a list of lectures, many of which have, during the last twenty-five years, at the request of Clergymen, Secretaries of Clubs, Institutions, &c., been prepared and delivered by the Author of this book, who is ready to make arrangements for repeating them again in London or elsewhere.

All communications to be addressed to the Author, care of Messrs. SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, & CO., Crown Buildings, Fleet Street, E.C.

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